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# THE CONFSSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

Rev. Paul H. Burgdorf, Editor, Red Lake Falls, Minn.

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Vol. I

January, 1940

No. 1

IN THIS ISSUE: Dedicatory Prayer—"The Confessional Lutheran"—Lutheran Union? A Case of Sanity and Charity Plus—An Open Forum.

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"The Confessional Lutheran" is a venture of faith. While it is aimed to publish the periodical monthly, it will regularly go to press only so long as the necessary support warrants this. Subscription: One Dollar per Year. Larger amounts are welcome.

## • Dedicatory Prayer

Lord God, whose will it is that everything be sanctified by Thy Word and Prayer, we come before Thee, beseeching Thee in mercy to hear us, as we bow before Thy throne of grace, seeking Thy favor and imploring Thee for Christ's sake to bless this work of our hands. It is Thine own glory that we seek as we approach this venture of faith, praying Thee only that our thoughts may ever be Thy thoughts, and Thy words our words, to the end that Thy adorable name may be hallowed, Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Let Thy strength, since we are conscious not only of our own frailty and sin, but also of Thy surpassing grace, be made perfect in weakness. Let this instrument of confession never become as a trumpet that giveth forth an uncertain sound, nor yet, lacking charity, as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Let not deceptive expediency or mistaken wisdom or false love, nor yet lovelessness and conceit, much less sinful ambition, becloud its horizon, dictate and vitiate its thought, supply its words, or impede its way. Let it truly serve as an endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Jesus Christ, being no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, that we may grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ. We ask it in His name, pleading that as our only merit. Amen.

## • "The Confessional Lutheran"

"The Confessional Lutheran" wants to be just what its name implies. It prayerfully and humbly desires to make a contribution to the cause of Confessional Lutheranism and to Lutheran Confessionalism.

Historic Christianity has given expression to its faith in the historic Creeds of Christendom. Who-

ever is a true Christian at heart will not hesitate to identify himself with those ecumenical creeds. And whoever will not do this must for all practical purposes rightly be considered as belonging outside the pale of the Christian Church—even though this may in any given instance not as a matter of fact be the real state of affairs. "For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." 1 Sam 16, 7. That, simply stated, is the Christian confessional principle.—a principle which has too often and too largely been lost sight of in times of controversy.

Historic Lutheranism, which for that matter is nothing more nor less than simple historic Christianity, has, forced to this necessity by historical circumstances, done as much for Lutheran Confessionalism. It has expressed itself in the historic Lutheran confessions, spontaneously producing the symbols containing in the Book of Concord, which is generally accepted by Lutherans. Whoever is a true Lutheran at heart will not hesitate to rally round that historic banner, and whoever refuses to do so must for all practical purposes be rightly considered as belonging outside the fold of the Lutheran Church. This, simply stated, is the Christian confessional principle as applied to Lutheranism in particular.

It is but natural that any given group within the Lutheran Church will sooner or later again express itself in more particular, carefully considered doctrinal statements, especially when compelling circumstances seem to make this imperative; and that fellowship within such a body then be conditioned on the acceptance or rejection of such statements. This does not imply an absolute judgment even as to the Lutheranism of those that cannot be fellowshiped, much less as to their Christianity; but it does preclude membership within such a body by those in question, as necessary requirement of considerations of discipline. That, simply stated, is the more particular application of the confessional principle to Lutheran synods.

As a matter of fact such a practice as that which has been outlined is followed, and properly, even in the case of individual congregations.

And what is more, once confessions have been accepted, those adopting them are rightly expected to live up to their profession. In our case they are

expected to be Confessional Lutherans and Lutheran Confessors, as to doctrine and as to practice, in matters of faith and in matters of life.

And herewith, then, the specific purpose of "The Confessional Lutheran" has been indicated. It stands for such Confessional Lutheranism and for such Lutheran Confessionalism as that which has been briefly outlined, first in our own midst, and then in the second instance, in the way of a testimony, over against them that are without. Seeking to remain true to the historic confessions, and like them and on the basis of them desiring to confess itself, it wishes to make some contribution to the historic mission of Lutheranism, and specifically of Missourianism as conceived amid all the travails of a new birth these one hundred years ago,—a mission which is in essence and effect nothing more nor less than that of first perpetuating itself in its pristine Confessional purity, and then in the second place seeking to unite all Lutherans on the truly ecumenic basis of its historic Confessions.

We are happy in the fact that we can know all who share such a view of things with us will rejoice that by the grace of God such a project as this can be launched. Numerous written assurances before us testify to the need of such a periodical. Even without these, such a need will be evident to all who can discern the signs of the times as readily as they can interpret the face of the sky.

From time to time, important documents will be reproduced within these pages, and a wealth of material that demands earnest consideration these days will be offered the reader. May these serve not only as a guide to action for one or the other of the numerous conferences being held today, but also as a humble voice in the quiet of the study, and as a silent influence in the home.

So far as the present writer is concerned, it was only after others, far more capable than he, for valid reasons and regretfully enough, felt themselves constrained to decline to render this service of love, that he yielded to the wholly unexpected entreaty of friends, who were for the most part hitherto quite unknown to him but to whom he nevertheless feels himself closer than a brother in the intimate fellowship of true Christian unity, and consented to assume the task of editing "The Confessional Lutheran". Having with much prayer put his hand to the plow, he looks to the God of all grace for constant guidance, wisdom, and strength, and earnestly beseeches others to remember him in their prayers in behalf of this common cause.

While the subject of discussion in these columns will necessarily be largely of a controversial nature, it is not only intended that issues should be discussed, but that they, moreover be dealt with in as wholly an objective way as at all possible. The editor will, particularly to this end, welcome criticisms and suggestions, and will feel himself bound, together with others whose articles may appear in these columns from time to time, to give careful consideration to every deserving stricture that may possibly be made.

Finally, it remains to say, that suggestions have been made that "The Confessional Lutheran" serve also the incidental purpose of guiding through the widespread maze of Socialistic and Communistic propaganda of our day and its undeniable effect upon the Church. While we are prepared for such an eventuality, actual materialization of such plans will depend on further encouragement and the amount

of support "The Confessional Lutheran" may receive to that end.

May God speed this first issue of our humble witness on its earnest mission as it is sent on its way.

## ● LUTHERAN UNION?

### A Case Of Sanity and Charity Plus—

#### TROUBLED ISRAEL

Yes, our Israel is troubled. There can be no doubt as to that.

Nor can there be any doubt as to the fact that our trouble dates back specifically to the Centennial Synod (of all things) which was held at St. Louis in 1938. If, incidentally, it should seem altogether strange that our Synod's Jubilee year should have produced such a troublesome union movement as that which we are witnessing today, then let it be said at once that Jubilees of all kinds have nearly always been known to have had a way of bringing about just such things.

But how did it all happen?

Without having allowed delegates, clerical and lay, who were to decide the momentous issue, time to consider them in a manner mandatory in such an important undertaking, a rather complicated combination of documents and resolutions was submitted to the convention for action, and subsequently adopted, which was to be of the most far-reaching significance to our church. There are those who while they were persuaded to vote on the matter at that time now readily state that they deeply regret having done so, now that they have had occasion to study the matter more thoroughly. Once and again the suggestion was made to defer action on the matter until the next synodical convention. But over against this there was insistent urging that action then and there was imperative. (Some of the reasons given have since demonstrably proven a sad mistake,—e. g. the insistence, made in good faith, that the American Lutheran Church was now "willing to come over to us and renounce its liberal associations.") One of the vice-presidents of Synod pleaded that "the delegates were not in a position to vote intelligently upon the matter." All in all, it does not seem too much to say, as one now reviews our synodical gathering on that historic occasion of a year ago; that "the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they had come together"—not to mention the great majority who necessarily remained at home (for certainly, in matters such as this, involving doctrine, and the most significant consequences, there must be unanimity).

At any rate one thing seems plain: there was too much haste. We were too much in a hurry. We tried to arrive before we got there. And now we must pay the price of our precipitancy. Having acted in haste, we may repent at leisure. A poll of Synod will show that we have become a house divided against itself.

It dare not be overlooked that it was our highest representative body, and therefore, in a parliamentary sense, Synod itself, that took action at St. Louis, and the honor of which is now concerned.

Such action, publicly taken, calls for public criticism, whether favorable or unfavorable.

And first, if it still be true that "if we would judge ourselves, we shall not be judged" (I Cor. 11, 31), it should hardly seem strange or alarming that the voice of criticism has been raised within our

own body. A body which is no longer willing to practice earnest self-criticism, should in the light of the deep and simple truth adduced, ask itself whether it has not become weak and sickly, if indeed it be not already wholly asleep in the deep sleep of death. No doubt we should therefore heartily thank God for giving us evidence of the fact that we are still capable of self-criticism.

And if it still be true that one is to be his brother's keeper, then it should neither seem strange that critical voices have been raised within synods with which the Missouri Synod stands in fraternal relation, particularly since the very constitution of the Synodical Conference in its statement as to its purpose calls for this, and since the Union Articles adopted at St. Louis, moreover, specifically state that the matter was to be submitted to these synods for approval before action taken with reference to them could be considered finally valid.

Nevertheless, bitter complaint has been raised because of criticisms that have been voiced within and without our Synod and so above all in a series of article now appearing in the "American Lutheran," to the first of which, "Lutheran Union—A Plea for Sanity and Charity," Vol XXII, No. 12 (December, 1939) we wish to reply.

As for the solicitous strictures of the Wisconsin and Norwegian Synods, which are vehemently decried in the article in question, we shall, since these people are no doubt well able to speak for themselves, have little to say in their defense beyond this that it seems to us it must be said by one of us in all fairness that there are grave misrepresentations of their criticisms in the American Lutheran article, due primarily to the omission of all-important qualifications. Thus, when it is said that Wisconsin denounces any further efforts of our union committee as "involving a denial of the truth," the vital qualification "under the circumstances" dare not be omitted which makes it at once a proposition that has the hearty endorsement of ever so many within our own fold. Or again, when it is urged against a Norwegian criticism of a plea for union by the chairman of our Union Committee that this plea contains the statement "there must be no establishment of fellowship at the expense of divine truth," it must not be overlooked that such a statement, good enough in itself, becomes wholly worthless, if truth is, after all, to be sacrificed, in spite of such an assurance, as many of us believe is plainly the case. We are then confronted by a situation involving the simple logical fallacy of a begging of the question. We shall, however, as stated, leave the Wisconsin and Norwegian brethren to answer for themselves, simply assuring them that as for us we shall thank them for every word of truth, however critical it may be, just so that it be spoken in love.

We wish to speak with reference to our own Synod in particular.

### "I CHALLENGE"

The American Lutheran article in question says—

"I will challenge anyone, however, to point to a single criticism of our articles and of later committee reports and synodical resolutions which has attacked these as containing error."

We accept that challenge.

Under the circumstances we feel constrained to accept it, lest silence on our part be justly construed as our becoming a party to denial of important

truth in the face of circumstances that call for witness-bearing.\*

And we need not go far afield in our search for such evidence as the challenge before us calls for.

In a protest to the Union Committee of the Missouri Synod by the Minnesota District North Park Region Special Conference, adopted April 27, 1939, and addressed to the General President of Synod, an unmistakable voice is raised, which records its convictions among other things as follows: "Our conviction is that the Declaration itself contains statement's of error\*\* and throughout does not offer sufficient protection against the leaven of error which the A. L. C. has harbored these many years." It specifies: "To wit: in Par. 2 we object to the statements to this end He also purposes to justify those who have come to the faith, since it is the old error\*\* of Iowa and Ohio 'Erst muss der Mensch glauben, dann wird er gerechtfertigt.' (Lehre und Wehre, Vol. 51, p. 387)." Later the same document in question expresses the conviction that "the entire doctrinal basis for future fellowship favors of sinful unionism," and it substantiates this serious charge by quoting Dr. F. Pieper's Unionism, p. 37f: "Sinful unionism is in evidence when, in the effort to bring about union, articles of agreement are drawn up that do, indeed, present the true doctrine, but that place some false doctrine alongside of it. Sinful unionism is furthermore in evidence when in negotiations to bring about unity ambiguous terms are used, i. e., terms that are interpreted correctly by some and mis-interpreted by others." There is more of this in the document quoted, which was printed in the Crucible, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 29f.

In a footnote the editor of the cited Crucible adds the testimony of another conference, on the basis of a report of one of its members, viz., the Synodical Conference Pastorial Conference at Marshall, Minn., which is quoted as follows: "After several hours of discussion it was the opinion of all, without objection, that not only should we demand an explanation of the statement in the Declaration concerning justification, but a correction."

This, we believe, disposes of the problem assigned us sufficiently to merit the coveted Q. E. D.

### A DISTURBING FEATURE

A disturbing feature in this whole matter is this that we must thus hear truths questioned which are so patent that they are known and read of all men. This is not the only instance of this kind that perturbs our spirit. It is a distressing fact that obtrudes itself upon us over and over again in this whole union controversy. However, we do not, in calling attention to it now, want to go, for evidence, beyond the bounds of what is suggested by "The American Lutheran" article itself, which is under

\*We remember certain words uttered by Dr. Dallmann at a District Convention some years ago and accompanied by the lively gesticulation necessary to give them weight and due emphasis: "Ich bin die Synode--du bist--die Synode--erist die Synode--sie ist die Synode--wir sind die Synode--lhr seid die Synode--sie sind die Synode: wenn wir erst einmal so Grammatik treiben lernen, dann kann unsere Synodeunter Gottes Segen noch einmal zur Bluete kommen." These words, spoken originally with reference to Synodical finances, hold true in a double measure as regards everyone of us with reference to the responsibility for purity of doctrine within our Synod. To each one of us God will one day say with reference to the situation which we are facing--and He says it today--"What hast thou done?"

\*\*Bold type is ours.

discussion. We shall at another time be forced to come back to this unpleasant subject. For the present, let it suffice to ask only; how shall we silence our disquieted spirits in the face of such a situation? It is a question one hesitates to ask, much less to answer.

(To Be Continued)

## • An Open Forum?

How open is the "open forum" represented by "The American Lutheran?"

This question which is not only an interesting one, but also an important one just now, can readily be answered on the basis of facts which are so evident that they must be accepted as convincing by everyone who examines them at all.

In the December 1939 issue of "The American Lutheran," its editor says:—

"The American Lutheran has always considered itself an open forum in which the voices of conflicting opinion so necessary and salutary for a democratic church body may be heard. In keeping with this policy, we are presenting in this issue an important article."

Strangely enough, however, the editor immediately goes on to say: "We honestly believe that this article has something to say which needed to be said." And the writer of the heavy feature article in question—the first in a series of several installments on the subject of Lutheran Union—lets the cat out of the bag when he, by way of introduction assures us that his article was "requested by the editors" of "The American Lutheran." If this were not enough to convince the most skeptical as to the self-deception of "The American Lutheran" with reference to the question of it's being or not being an open forum, we would suggest that the special leading editorial of its December and of its January issues, "A Needed Voice," and "A Needed Voice II" be read in their entirety.

All of this, in itself convincing enough, of course represents only one side of the matter. There is still the question: will not "The American Lutheran" at least give some semblance of justification to its claim of being an open forum, by giving equal space to those who hold an opposite view from that of its editors and their invited feature writers, who upon request, compose articles that are meant to fortify the "American Lutheran" position.

This question, too, can be readily answered.

Some months ago, there was submitted to "The American Lutheran" an article on Unionism in which views are expressed that are the opposite of those championed by this instrument of propaganda for a totalitarian Lutheran church. Although the article in question was submitted by no one less than one of its own associate editors, whose special department had regularly appeared in this organ for quite a number of years, it was rejected. (This was, to be exact, about the time the pro-union series of articles already referred to was requested).

We could offer other evidence to show that the open forum of "The American Lutheran" is not so very open. But why should we?

The rejected article on unionism referred to has, by the way, now been printed as a tract, and may be ordered in lots of 100@ \$1.00 from Rev. F. R. Webber, 223 Newbury St., Boston, Mass. We suggest that you order a supply.

In all of this we have a good illustration of the proverbial intolerance of the tolerant.

Incidentally, we may take this opportunity to say we do not intend to claim that "The Confessional Lutheran" should be considered in the nature an open forum. That is necessarily precluded in a paper of this sort by the important consideration that truth cannot be accorded merely an equal place alongside of error. We do not believe that the voices of conflicting opinion are any more necessary and salutary in the life of a democratic church body than it is necessary and salutary for an individual to swallow pellets of poison with his food or to imbibe a bit of hydrochloric acid with every drink he takes. (We realize that there was some justification for "The American Lutheran's" open forum policy before it left its original province of serving exclusively as a church publicity medium, and that it also presented an open forum then.) We want to assure every reader that if he thinks he discerns anything that looks at all like unwholesome fare in the columns of this paper, his calling attention to this is earnestly solicited and will receive the most careful attention, and in the suppositious case of just criticism, an honest correction, respectively due retraction, in the place and in the manner in which the error is supposed to have occurred.

What more—or less—can or should anyone ask?

## • Coming Issues

D. v., the next issue of the "Confessional Lutheran" will, continuing the article on "Lutheran Union: A Case of Sanity and Charity Plus—," bring the following subtitles: "The leaven of Melanchthonianism—An Old Technique—A New Formula of Concord—The Answer is 'No'—Honest Men, So What?—Wanted: Theologians!—How Come 'Accepted'? —A Shoe That Doesn't Fit—The Conclusion of the Whole Matter."

Following this, there will be a brief resume of The History of the Church Fellowship Controversy in the Lutheran Church of America with Special Reference to the Synodical Conference and the Missouri Synod in Particular. This will prepare the way for an important series of articles on The Dogmatic—Historical Background of the Present Union Movement, which will give particular consideration to the various specific doctrines involved, by Rev. J. Buenger.

We also hope to take up in an early issue the subject of "The Historic Lutheran Position in Non-Fundamentals."

Other subjects to be treated are: Ecumenic Lutheranism, Traditionalism, and Syncretism. There will be brief quotes from other periodicals which seem especially appropriate and timely.

Above all, it will always be borne in mind that we are moving toward the year 1941 A. D., and every word that goes into these pages will be written from that point of view.

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(Additional copies of this issue of "The Confessional Lutheran" may be had at 4c each or in quantities at the special price of \$1.00 per 50 post-paid, if ordered within fifteen days after date of publication, after which the printer's forms will be destroyed.)

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLE OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

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# THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

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Vol. I

February, 1940

No. 2

IN THIS ISSUE: What is a Sect?—The Leaven of Melancthonism—Instead of a Faith—Are We Ready for a Totalitarian Church?—The Layman Question—Question Box—The Beginning of the End—Is it Time for This?—Passing a Good Thing Along.

## • What Is A Sect?

When does a religious body cease to be a true church and become a mere sect? The unionist says: When one stands aloof from others who call themselves Christian denominations. The externalist says: When one adheres to outmoded customs and forms of worship. The liberal says: When we teach doctrines that others have long since given up because of science and modern critical research. The indifferentist says: When we keep harping away on doctrinal matters when there are such enormous common tasks awaiting our attention.

All of these are wrong answers. Our older theologians knew the true answer. They were right in saying that *sola gratia* is the basic distinction between the true Christian and the sectarian. The moment a church body is indifferent to the fact that man is a lost sinner, and is saved solely by the grace of God in Christ, then that body is a sect.

Certain Lutheran journals have been assuring us lately that the sects have changed radically. Thus far they are correct. But when they tell us that they have changed for the better, this statement is untrue. The sects are not becoming conservative.

The sectarians no longer attack the Bible. They no longer issue pamphlets, as some of their prominent men did only 20 years ago, attacking the divinity of our Saviour. Today the sects even say much about the blood of Jesus Christ. However, they are most ominously silent in regard to our Lord's active obedience. Some radio preachers are equally silent on this point. There is a sinister reason. To discover this reason, it is necessary to understand the principle of present-day sectarianism.

1. All sectarianism today agrees in glorifying man. They no longer teach that man is a hopeless sinner. Their modernistic Church Year which they have been building up gradually, keeps the facts of human relationship in the foreground. Their religious books are full of it. Their sermons of today are almost always on some topic relating to the social order, the relation of man to his fellow man. Much as the sects deplore war and persecution, yet they believe that man is essentially good. To say that

"man has no power within himself to save himself" is offensive to them. They believe that the right kind of books, the right kind of education, the right kind of politics, the right kind of psychology and the right kind of sermons will save man.

2. Sectarians are unanimous in teaching that grace alone cannot save us. This statement sounds shocking, but it is true. The writer has traveled some 30,000 miles within the past four years, and has met with hundreds of sectarians, and listened to many sermons. We have made it a point to put just one question to scores of men: "Does man have any part in the plan of salvation?" The answer has always been an emphatic affirmative. We put that question to many men, privately, at the Oxford World Conference, which we attended as a reporter. The invariable answer was: "Yes, definitely so." Their theories ranged all the way from the doing of good and the avoiding of evil deeds, all the way along the line to faith. Many declared that faith is a good work in man, which God sees in him. Because of this, they believe, God saves man in view of this faith. That, by the way, always has a strangely familiar sound. Scores and scores of radio sermons, here and abroad, bear out this conclusion. The sects certainly believe that man is a noble creature, and that he can at least co-operate in the work of his salvation.

In no instance, whether in the world's greatest cathedrals or in some humble moorland chapel, did we ever hear a present-day sectarian preach that man is utterly lost and condemned, and unable by his own reason or strength to believe in Jesus Christ or come to him. Always the assumption was that man has some latent good within him. In no case did we ever hear it preached that our Lord Jesus kept the whole Law for us perfectly, twenty centuries ago, and left nothing for us to do. In no case did we ever hear that even the faith that is in us is wholly a gracious gift of God. The most extreme case was a sectarian preacher in Cornwall, who declared that Judas is saved, because God is too good to condemn even His worst enemy.

3. Since the sectarians of today believe in the nobility of man, and since they believe that man can co-operate in the work of salvation, hence they

do not believe in *sola gratia* and *universalis gratia*. Send for the thick printed reports of the Oxford and Edinburgh World Conference of 1937 and see for yourself. Note how invariably they place two conflicting doctrinal statements together. For example: Man is saved by grace alone, yet man must co-operate in the work of salvation. We argued that point until midnight with a very learned sectarian leader. He would not yield an inch. "No," he said, "if I agree with you that the Lord Jesus kept the Law so fully that there's nothing left for me to do, I should be compelled to say that man is a mere automaton. Certainly, certainly, man must co-operate in the work of his salvation."

When then does an orthodox church body become a sect? The moment she is willing, for sweet charity's sake, to tolerate some doctrinal agreement which does not declare in emphatic, unambiguous language that man cannot keep the Law, that Jesus Christ kept it perfectly in our stead, and that we are saved only by His blood and His perfect righteousness.

Such statements have been strangely lacking in certain journals of late. Why this ominous silence in regard to our Saviour's perfect obedience to the Law? Do some of us fear that it might offend those who still adhere to synergism?

Doctrinal awareness is not all that it should be in our own circles, for on February 4, one of our "Doctors," in a signed article accompanied by his picture, declared that we "discipline our bodies in order to liberate our souls." A more abject denial of the basic truth of *sola gratia* we have never read anywhere. Even Mann's priceless book, "Lutheranism in America," published some eight decades ago, has no parallel among all the corruptions he deplores.

The basic doctrine of all is *sola gratia*. All other issues are trivial compared to that. So long as we are on the right side of the fence we are true Christians. The moment we go over the fence, and give man the slightest part in the plan of salvation, from that time onward we are a sect. —F. R. W.

## • LUTHERAN UNION?

### A Case Of Sanity And Charity Plus—

#### THE LEAVEN OF MELANCHTHONIANISM

The American Lutheran article which we are discussing says further—though incorrectly, as has already been shown, when it attempts to reduce all criticism that has been made of the A. L. C. Declaration merely to this—

"In every case it is the implication that 'here error can hide,' 'here false doctrine finds protection,' if it is not the direct insinuation that on the one part there has been an attempt to hide, cunningly, some traditional heresy while the other party is either too dull to see how the church is being hoodwinked or has too little regard for divine truth to insist on a better statement."

Let us examine this statement somewhat more closely and see just what merit it may have.

And first of all, let us, in considering this statement, note the unmistakable charity of many of those who have criticised the proposed union basis. For, in face of the fact that there are those who

insistently charge the Declaration with outright error, others are still willing to restrict themselves in their criticism to a mere speaking of "inadequacy" and the like, is not this in itself evidence of the greatest measure of charity—and especially when we consider that nothing less than such great, vital principles as those of *sola Scriptura* and *sola gratia* are at stake? Does it seem proper and becoming that such obvious charity be made the butt of ridicule by a plea which is purportedly a "plea for charity?" Far from having proved his case in charging certain defendants with a lack of charity, the complainant seems rather to have proved the case of those whose position he would condemn—unless the word "charity" is indeed to be understood as liberality, in the sense of liberalism, in which sense it is known to be often used. At any rate, the situation is such as to make the question seem wholly in place: "Is thine eye evil because I am good?"

But in the second place—and this is more important—is not such a situation as that which the quoted statement predicates, in itself bad enough?

It is if Christ's oft-repeated "beware!" with respect to just such a situation still holds true. If the common-sense principles which our Lord advocates are to prevail, then the way to deal with error is to bar the door against it so that it cannot make its entrance at all. It will not do to wait and see whether, having left the door open to it and given it some occasion for entrance, it will really put in its appearance, in the vain hope of then casting it out again. Here, too, viewed from the standpoint of simple sanity—and the plea for sanity has been made—the proverbial ounce of prevention is worth pounds of cure. Matters which are at stake in a situation such as that which the proposed union has brought us to face are too all-important to be risked on the strength of documents that evidently and demonstrably represent the accumulated result of years of studied and concentrated ambiguity.

We do not want to speak merely in general terms. Circumstances require that we be more specific.

When we consider the Missourian Brief Statement by itself, we recognize in it the sure hand of blessed Dr. F. Pieper, and we rejoice to recall that "Pieper's theology was Walther's theology and Walther's theology was Luther's theology"—which in turn again was simply the pure Christian theology of God's Holy Word with its crystal-clear fountain of grace. But when we turn from that to the A. L. C. Declaration, which is to be accorded an equal place—and in fact more than that: a position of dominance, which would eventually crowd out the sole authority of the Scriptures and all that given with it, in the 1938 St. Louis union basis, we cannot help exclaiming: Pieper's theology we know, and Walther's theology we know; but whose theology is this? In endeavoring to establish its identity we clearly recognize it as the work of another hand, and as we trace it through readily discernible channels to its source, we can only see in it the leaven of Melancthonism, which in the words of Dr. Bente "may be defined as an effort to inoculate Lutheranism with a unionistic and Calvinistic virus." (Hist. Intr., Trigl. Conc., p. 252.) Lest anyone rise with shrieks of alarm and seemingly just dismay because of such an accusation and its serious implications, we hasten to add at once what Dr. Bente rightly says of Melancthon's alterations of the Augsburg

Confession in his day: "True, in making all these changes, Melancthon did not introduce any direct heresy in the Variata. He did, however, in the interest of his irenic and unionistic policy and dogmatic vacillations, render ambiguous and weaken the clear sense of the Augustana. By his changes he opened the door and cleared the way as it were, for his deviations in the direction of Synergism, Calvinism, etc." (Loc. cit., p. 26) That, exactly, covers the case also as regards the A. L. C. Declaration over against the Missourian Brief Statement in our day.

A third criticism which still remains to be made is this, that, even aside from the charge of Melancthonism, acceptance of any given set of theses, and submission to circumstances such as those involved in the present union situation, in any case establish a prejudice, quite by themselves, namely,—the very prejudice that **they have been accepted**, whatever their eventual interpretation may prove to be. This is a question which the quoted statement wants to see completely ignored.

We already have had to hear statements such as this, the synodical endorsement of the Union Committee Report was "voted not once but three times by the Convention of 1938," (a subject which might, incidentally, be justly made the subject of some little criticism). We have once and again had to read that "the vote was unanimous," (a statement which, by the way, has been challenged by such as say they themselves voted against the resolution in question.) We are now being told that our Synod has accepted the 1938 Union Articles "as a settlement of the controversies" which have kept Missouri and the A. L. C. apart, and as "a sufficient doctrinal basis for church union" (a statement which just isn't true. Even the chairman of our Union Committee has not hesitated to admit). Although it was at least partly because it was finally urged as the clinching argument just before the closing of the debate on the question, that the American Lutheran Church is now willing to come over to us and renounce its liberal associations and that we should not now refuse them (*Lutheran Witness*, Vol LVII, No. 12J, p. 4), we are now being assured that the St. Louis resolutions do not call for such separation" (which statement gives us occasion to point out, if we may anticipate a bit, that also what a document does not say can after all be important). And so we might go on.

One might also illustrate the potential significance of such a prejudice as that which has now been established through acceptance of the St. Louis union articles, by examples from our own past experience and that of others, both remote and more recent. There is, for instance, the lamentable fact that our synod, while declining to accept the Chicago Theses some years ago, failed on the other hand definitely to reject them—thus establishing a prejudice which has been seized on and capitalized in the present situation. This is in fact a matter which is of sufficient importance to warrant a fuller discussion in another connection. But this whole question will no doubt be sufficiently clear without further illustration.

There is a rather old-tried, and proven way of circumventing the deceitful Melancthonian technique which is plainly employed in the drafting of the A. L. C. Declaration. We shall speak of it in our next installment.

(To be continued)

## • Instead Of A Faith

### A NEW MEANS OF GRACE

Not merely the social gospel, but Socialism itself, founded on well enunciated Marxian principles (Communism to many of us) is evidently—so evidently that he that runneth may read—making fearful inroads among us in these trying days, in which history moves with seven-league boots. The old faith in God, Law and Gospel, sin and grace, as the all-sufficient explanation of all that is respectively evil or good, will soon have had their day if voices which are being clamorously and persistently raised among us are to prevail.

If such a statement should seem alarming, then these few words will in some measure have begun to serve their purpose.

Let me point you to the evidence of that whereof I speak.

### A MARXIAN PROPHET IN OUR MIDST

I refer at this time primarily to important statements in an article captioned "Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread", which is to be found in the January, 1940, issue of *The American Lutheran*.

Let us see what these say.

We read, to begin with, and this is basic in the article—

"Since fifty per cent of our ministry is paid less than the inadequate average synodical salary, it appears that a large portion of our ministry has become a white collar proletariat. It has barely enough to feed, house, clothe the body. It has nothing (?) to maintain and develop the intellectual, spiritual (!) and personal resources to a successful ministry in a different age." —(P. 13.)\*

If this is not the language of Socialism, then there is no such thing. And if, on the other hand, all of this seems in itself bad enough then listen further, as the oracle in question later summarily concludes—

"It is likely that every (!) difficulty confronting our Synod today finds its deepest (!!) cause in the financial debacle of our ministry. (!!!)"\* —P. 23.

### INSIDIOUS ERROR CLASSIFIED

This, in the medical field, would simply have to be called quackery. Surface blemishes are to be removed, when "the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint" (Isa. 1, 5.). Mere symptoms are pointed to as being in themselves the deepest-lying cause of some mysteriously baffling disease, the real nature of which is some disturbance in the blood, some deep-seated affection within the life-stream itself. In the precinct of sacred things, this is not merely charlatanism, but a hollow mockery. It is essentially an error which has been imported from another field, and which can be precisely classified: It is simply the invasion of our Church by the forces of Socialism. Feed a man, clothe him, shelter him adequately (all of which things we, too, believe are in themselves, to a point, desirable things), and he will be a better creature within. That is the magic formula of Socialism, and the specific panacea which is being prescribed for all the present ills of our Church. Better external, social conditions will in themselves, it is assumed, produce a better spiritual status. This topsy-turvy philosophy, which hopelessly confuses cause and effect, is being hawked among us and proffered as the last word of wisdom; such

\*Footnote: Question mark and exclamation points are ours.



simple, fundamental, evident, and to us hitherto precious truths as Lk. 17, 20f, Mt. 6, 33, and a host of others notwithstanding.

### AN OLD OFFENSE

If such condemnation seem precipitate and harsh, then let it be said that the writer would be ready to be more sparing in his denunciation of this disturbing philosophy, if it were not for the fact that it has long since been boring from within in our Church, and if, years back, there had not dripped from the same pen which has recorded the above sentiments such contaminating virus as e. g. the following urgent plea, to cite but one of numerous previous offenses:

"That we awake to the fact that an age of tradition has passed in every sphere of thought and life. The physical sciences, the social sciences, philosophy, religion (!), democracy, capitalism, individualism—all are finding that their fundamental (!) assumptions are falling, that age-old policies are proving futile as life has become so much deeper (!!!) and more many-sided since the upheaval of the World War."\*

"Lutheran Solidarity," *News Bulletin* of the National Lutheran Council, September 18, 1936. Also reported more fully, with the necessary critical condemnation, in *Theol. Quartalschrift*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January, 1937), p. 26ff.

If we were to mention one more notorious example of transgression on the part of the mastermind behind the Socialistic philosophy represented by *The American Lutheran* it would be the "Basic Issue" appeal sent to the clergy throughout the Lutheran Church in America many moons ago, in the interest of a united socialistic church. But is not what we have heard enough to make one rent his garments and cry: "What further need have we of witnesses?"

### THE ISSUE

What think ye? Should eternal truth be discarded as an uncertain and indifferent thing at best, and the grace of God be made of no effect, while a reliance on mere external, material, Socialistic considerations is left to determine the course of our church, its thinking, its activity, and its final destiny, as well as the ultimate fate of its members? That is the decisive issue which we face.

## • Are We Ready For A Totalitarian Church?

The identical philosophy which has been shown to be prominent, in *The American Lutheran* article discussed, under the head "Instead of a Faith" is reflected also in the editorial "For Restless Laymen" (Loc. cit., p. 4), if indeed this effusion does not bear every mark and evidence of being penned by the same hand. Its basic proposition is that it is because many of our clergy are not adequately fed, clothed, housed, that they are against a totalitarian Lutheran Church!

### CLASS AGAINST CLASS

Incidentally, this rather inflammatory editorial also has the marks of the tactics of the totalitarian, subversive, Socialistic thought of our age in that it pits class against class—in this instance the laymen against the clergy—in its endeavor to gain its ends, and in that it assumes, or pretends, to speak for the masses of the class to which it plays itself up.

\*Footnote: Question marks & exclamation points are ours.

He elects himself as a committee of one to speak for our laymen and represents them as saying: "It is high time that the laymen take hold of things. Some day the laymen will take the bit between their teeth and then we shall 'go places.'"

To all of which we have only one thing to say in reply, so far as our laymen are concerned, and that is simply this, that we have infinitely more faith in them than that. Quite aside from that matter, however, all of this does suggest a pertinent question.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

We wonder, if what is said were true, where it is supposed we should go.

(It is another characteristic of Socialists, that they are, like children with their undisciplined imaginations, always dreaming "vague bignesses," they have this in common with Socialistic religious enthusiasts—who will, to make their point, even misquote you the passage "Where there is no vision, the people perish"—and all other Utopian dreamers. They are, as a Southerner would say, constantly "fixin' to do" things; but, asked to be more articulate, and queried as to an explanation of just how they mean to achieve whatever it is that they are after, they are usually at a loss to explain themselves more fully. They have never thought things through. Nevertheless, as for general suggestions, they have an ever constant and invincible attitude of what-is-it-you-want? We-have-it; and if-not, we-will-get-it-for-you! If one were to analyze this characteristic, it would no doubt be found to be nothing more nor less than an unlimited amount of self-confidence.)

If it were really true, as is suggested that anyone were threatening to "go places" with our church, then we would have only one simple and pertinent bit of advice to give, and that is: Get your direction, before you try for distance!

### "THEOLOGICAL" HODGE-PODGE

When the pastor's adequate or inadequate support is spoken of, it delights us immensely to be able to agree heartily with most of what is said—and how could anyone, clerical or lay, who is at all Christian and has the welfare of his church at heart, take any other view of things? But when material poverty is postulated as the one unailing explanation of any given minister's poverty of spirit, and especially of what is regarded as diffidence as to falling in line with the forces mobilized behind *The American Lutheran* in its present Blitzkrieg, which is being waged with a view to incorporating the supposedly too reactionary Missouri Synod is a contemplated new totalitarian Lutheran Church, we cannot follow any longer. We have come to the parting of our ways.

### GOLD OR GOD

Is it gold or is it God that is to determine the value of our spiritual ministrations, and of our final ecclesiastical fate? That eventually is the issue as it is put.

The question is really not difficult to answer.

We happen to know of a minister who rarely had as much as a dime. One day, accompanied by a fellow-pastor who was perennially in like circumstances, he met a lame beggar, and he said: "Gold and silver have I none." "But," he added at once, "such as I have give I thee—in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" And the poor man leaped up, stood, and walked.



Every true minister of Christ, though he be no Peter or John, always has something that makes him infinitely greater than either his own circumstances or those of others, whom he is to serve, and which thus makes him an able minister of the New Testament.

"In every condition, in sickness and health  
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth."

Permit us to recall an old anecdote. One of the Roman pontiffs once was displaying the church's rich treasures, with the remark: "The Church can no longer say 'Gold and silver have I none!'" "No," was the instant reply, "neither can she say 'Arise and walk!'"

#### THE HEART OF THE MATTER

What we would say—and that strikes at the root of the matter, is: Certainly, these two issues, the pastor's material support on the one hand, and his spiritual resources on the other hand, and specifically his outlook in matters of church union, are to be kept strictly apart; each must be left to stand by itself, on its own merits.

We are not yet ready to accept the Marxian concept of economic determinism, which the principles that become so vocal in *The American Lutheran* article on the Fourth Petition so dangerously approach, and which the editorial in question, too reflects.

### • The Layman Question

It seems we can't get away from this question, suggested by *The American Lutheran*, after all, without saying a word or two.

#### OUR LAYMEN HAVE A DAY

Led by a very able man, E. Edw. Vehse, the laymen of our church did once take the bit between their teeth in an endeavor to go places in opposition to their clergy. Their leader was himself enough of a theologian of a sort to have a library which would no doubt compare favorably with that of not a few of our pastors today, and—an interesting historical fact—he wrote a treatise, a "Public Protestation" against the clergy, which was the first theological work published within what is now the Missouri Synod. This man and his following—known as Protestationists—evidently had good intentions. Moreover, he was an erudite L. L. D. (one of the very few men with degrees those days) who upon his return to Dresden some years later wrote a forty-eight volume history of the German courts. What is more, he was also a very efficient organizer and a man of a very practical turn of mind. And yet the abortive movement which he led turned out to be such a sorry mistake after all, and made such an unhappiness of things that our infant church, ere yet it could discard its swaddling-bands, was paralyzed to such an extent, that it could not even creep, much less walk and go places; yes, it was almost completely and permanently crippled. The one fatal mistake of this otherwise excellent man was that he would not co-operate with the clergy in seeking to analyze their common problems in the light of God's all-revealing Word with a view towards their eventual solution. As the little booklet lies before us, which tells this impressive story of one hundred years ago, and we fondle its now aging and tattered pages, the thought comes over us with an overpowering force: Ah, what lessons you can preach our church today—if only we are not too unwilling to learn!

#### MORE FAITH IN OUR LAYMEN!

If anyone were to ask us, what we thought of our present-day laity, we would say that they are in our opinion on the whole one of the brightest hopes of our church. For they live and move and have their being in God, and they have a tremendous respect for His Holy Word, not forgetting the deep significance and the fundamental implications of such elementary Christian principles as those of I Thess. 5, 12ff and Hebr. 13, 17 in their relations with their divinely called clergy. And as for the controversial issues which still keep us apart from the A. L. C., not to mention others, if these should, as is suggested, be reduced to their simplest terms without the splitting of hairs, so that the most uninitiated can understand, they still believe in certain principles, more firmly than some pastors and professors whom we know. They believe that the Bible has spoken and is clear; that confessions can be, and so far as the historic Creeds of Christendom and the Lutheran Confessions are concerned, actually are, likewise clear; and that synodical statements today should be as clear and unmistakable. They believe that the world was created in six days, not in so many undefined and very likely interminable periods of time. They believe that it is because God purposed it that men come to faith and are justified, not that He purposes to justify those who have come to the faith. They believe that the Christian Church is essentially an invisible thing, not that we are to look for any sort of outward manifestation of it; that the one-time Covenant people are as a people rejected, not that some hope of an eventual conversion is held out for them; that we are to look for no millennium of any sort, however fine-spun the warp and woof of its weaving may be, but for the coming of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ for the final execution of just judgment upon them who are to perish in self-willed unbelief and for the complete redemptive deliverance of those who are His in gracious faith. They believe that Christ "will at the last day raise up me and all the dead", not that the physical resurrection of some of the Christian martyrs is to be expected before that day; that the significant prediction of the revelation of the Anti-Christ as the signal for the preparation for the impending coming of the Lord has been definitely fulfilled, not that it is in any measure still to be sought in the future. So much do we feel confident that our laymen still hold to these fundamental truths, that I am sure they would as a body justly rise up in righteous indignation against our clergy if they began to preach another gospel which is not a Gospel; or if they no longer wanted to mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which they have learned and avoid them, but instead try to make out that such differences need not be divisive of true Christian fellowship. And now let's, since this was the original proposal, not have any splitting of hairs about this!

### • Passing A Good Thing Along

A good mimeographed paper on Prayer-Fellowship which was presented to the Chicago Pastoral Conference recently can be secured from Rev. G. Elbert, 2751 S. Karlov Ave., Hawthorne Station, Chicago, Ill. It is suggested that you enclose fifteen cents for mimeographing and postage.

## • Question Box

This feature of our paper, it seems, can prove very valuable in helping to emphasize the present *status quo*, in articulating the many problems that confront us in the present union movement, and in reflecting the varying thoughts and sentiments which prevail as to them in our midst. This department will be retained so long as sufficiently numerous questions which are of such a nature as to be of general interest warrant this. In some instances questions may be composite. Where quotations are used this will mean that the question of some individual is being exactly cited. Correspondence relative to questions will be kept on file, and will be offered for inspection to those who may desire this.

Question No. 1 'We dislike the thought of eventually amalgamating with loose Lutherans who care little about doctrine and much less about schools and Scriptural lodge practice, but where is the PROOF that it will be un-SCRIPTURAL to establish pulpit and altar fellowship with them?' —Detroit, Michigan.

This will no doubt prove a very interesting question to many among us.

1) It grants that the situation which confronts us is or may be one in which we are considering an approach toward such "loose Lutherans" as are characterized. 2) It voices a disinclination as regards outright amalgamation (organic union) with Lutherans of the sort described. 3) It expresses doubt as to the un-Scripturalness of the establishment of pulpit and altar fellowship with such Lutherans.

The answer to the question, which is posed in the last member of the above analysis, is found in such passages as e. g. John 8,31f; Mt. 18, 20; 1 Cor. 1, 19; Rom. 16, 17, and a host of others.

Would we in view of such clear and compelling Scriptures want to answer for a single soul which, looking to a Lutheran pulpit or coming to a Lutheran altar, is not directed to *sola Scriptura* and to the purest streams of *sola gratia*—to touch on the heart of the matter? That is the issue which we must face.

## • The Beginning Of The End

"It is just at this point, the determining of the duration of creation, that apostasy from the clear Scriptural doctrine is apt to set in. And if the devil is given a finger, a proverb says, then he will soon take the whole hand. For how many has not just the teaching of demiurgic cons become the occasion for doubt as to the entire creation account of the Bible, and finally also for complete apostasy from the revealed word! Let us therefore be led astray neither by Bettex, nor by Hoffmann, Vilmar, or other illustrious names. Let us also here remain true to the simple meaning of the word and inculcate as the pure unadulterated truth among our Christian people all that the Scriptures state as to creation, whether it be in our sermons, in our private intercourse, in the Sunday School (Christenlehre), or in the confirmation class. "In six days God created heaven and earth and all that in them is." —"Die Evolution und die Bibel." Lehre und Wehre, LV (1909), P358.

## • The Task of the Second Century

In an excellent and timely article, entitled "The Significance of the Doctrine of the Church and the Ministry as Professed by Our Fathers on the Basis of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, for Our General Theological Orientation" in the "Concordia Theological Monthly," XI, 1 (Jan., 1940), Dr. J. T. Mueller shows the specific contribution which our fathers made to the Church in their day, and the remarkable acumen and courage with which they applied the doctrine in question to their circumstances. Having shown this, he appropriately enough concludes by pertinently remarking: "In the second century of our Church we are confronted with the doctrine of biblical inspiration and scriptural authority as the *objecta defendendi*. May it be granted us to see as clearly and to act as wisely as did our consecrated fathers."

To all of which—since, "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Ps. 11, 3—we say: Amen! And all the people shall say: Amen!

## • Is It Time For This?

The writer remembers having read somewhere of an African tribe which has the peculiar custom of calling a halt every so often on its wanderings, for the purpose of "waiting for the soul to catch up."

Perhaps this is not such a bad idea after all.

The Missouri Synod has as a body made some great forward strides during its first hundred years which have just come to a close or are about to come to a close soon. But have we not more recently reached a point where it will be well to "wait for its soul to catch up?"

## Coming Issues

Our next issue will, D. v., bring an article on Traditionalism, another one on An Old Technique, and A Preface of Socialism and Communism. Regular installments on the latter subject, and the requisite modest enlargement of our paper, have been made possible by a larger specific contribution for this purpose. For other prospective subjects we refer to the previously announced "Coming Issues."

We also want to take this opportunity to thank the many brethren who have written us, for their encouraging sentiments, and solicit their continued prayers and support as well as that of others.

\* \* \* \*

(Additional copies of this issue of "The Confessional Lutheran" may be had at 5c each or in quantities at the special price of \$1.00 per 50 post-paid, if ordered within fifteen days after date of publication, after which the printer's forms will be destroyed. Only subscribers and contributors are assured copies of every issue. All subscriptions and inquiries should be addressed to Business Manager, Rev. A. E. Beck, Foley, Minnesota.)

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

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# THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--I Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF, Editor  
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Foley, Minnesota

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Vol. I

March, 1940

No. 3

IN THIS ISSUE: Destroying The Foundations—What Is A Sect? II—An Old Technique—For The Record—A Preface To Communism And Socialism—On Being Branded A Sect—Telling The Tide Of Battle—The Three Steps Of Error

## • Destroying The Foundations

When *sola Scriptura* is proclaimed as the first principle of the Lutheran Reformation, this does not merely mean what is perhaps well enough comprehended in the popular slogan "The Bible, all of the Bible, and nothing but the Bible!" It means more particularly the *nuda Scriptura*, without any interpretation whatsoever, simply as it reads, according to the plain words of the text. (Cp. Pieper, *Christl. Dogm.*, I. under "Schrift und Exegese," p. 436f.) The first principle of interpretation is that there should ordinarily be no interpreting. Strictly, interpretation becomes necessary only when the context clearly demands this, and the situation thus compels it. (Cp. L. Fuerbringer, *Hermeneutik*, p. 11.)

The Bible, as just defined, is the foundation of our faith also with regard to what we believe to be true as to the beginning of things, as recorded in its opening words, Gen. 1, 1ff. (Cp. Hebr. 11, 3.) To insist in the face of what is recorded that "we don't know conditions that obtained at that time" is virtually a denial of faith, a rejection of the plain words of Scripture, as well as of the essential characteristic of the clarity of the Scriptures; and an acceptance, instead, of the first false principle, the *proöten pseudos*, of the newer theology, which attempts to reduce faith to the mere level of a "science." (Cp. Pieper, *Christl. Dogm.*, I, p. 47.) To tolerate the least departure from Scripture, here as elsewhere, is a denial of the fundamental principle of Christian confessionalism, as it is so plainly stated in a multitude of passages, such as e. g. Mt. 28, 20.

As is usually the case when Christian truth is denied, so also here, any attack on what is written in Gen. 1, 1ff not only serves to destroy the organic foundation of faith, i. e. the Scriptures; but it also affects the personal or real foundation, viz. Christ. Let anyone begin to give the least consideration to the high priests of unbelief and follow a policy of craven vacillation over against the plain truth of the Scriptures, and he will soon find himself facing the question: "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" And if others then begin to clamor for His total destruction, it is a vain mockery

to wash one's hands in pretended innocence, protesting that one had never intended the matter should go so far.

It is often objected that a denial of the Genesis account of creation, for example, by an erroneous assumption of six demiurgic eons instead of the ordinary hexaemeral days, so clearly described by the man of God, Moses, is not a matter of saving faith (and hence is of lesser importance, as is likewise wrongly assumed.) But such a denial in reality destroys the veracity of Christ, and thus in the last analysis makes Him to be "of no effect." For Christ tells us as to the first conjugal pair, that He which made them "made them at the beginning." Mt. 19, 3-8. If the first man and the first woman were not created on the sixth terrestrial day of primeval time, but rather sometime during the last of six consecutive millions of years, then the word of Christ would simply not be true; especially when we add, as we necessarily must, the further important consideration that we are said to be living in the world's last days. For, far from being identified with the beginning, the "day" of man's creation could then properly be associated only with the end of time. (Cp. also II Pet. 3, 3-7; Gen. 8, 21f. It may not be amiss to add that the Scriptural statement of the age of Adam and other details of his life make it impossible to conceive of his having lived through even an inappreciable amount of a fictitious eonic day.)

When our fathers stated, during past controversies, that the Church can never hope to get beyond a fundamental unity in this world, they meant just such a unity as rests, as it necessarily must, upon the God-given threefold foundation of faith, as opposed to the absolute which lies beyond the stars and hence beyond the present reach of imperfect men. (Cp. I Cor. 13, 9-12.) They did not mean something quite contrary to this, which begins with the scrapping of this very foundation or any part of it, however unessential it may seem to the perversity or the conceit of man. Cp. Walther, in *Lehre und X* (1939), pp. 255-262; 351-357.) We, too, are accustomed *Webre*, Vol. 14, pp. 101-114. (*Conc. Theol. Monthly*, to speak of a threefold foundation of faith, viz.---

the real foundation (Christ), the dogmatic foundation (the various articles of saving Christian doctrine), and the organic foundation (the Scriptures). I Cor. 3, 11; Eph. 2, 20; John 10, 35. But the essential unity of this threefold foundation, its constituting one complete and integrated whole appears from the fact that no one of its pillars can be assailed without imperiling the others also. To put it another way, it matters but little, after all, whether one attacks a single doctrine, or the whole of Scripture, or the living, personal word: Christ. The effect is in the end ever one and the same—destruction of the entire foundation of faith. And “if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”—Ps. 11, 3.

## • What Is A Sect?

### II

Of course a mere outward assent to *sola gratia* is not enough. We discovered that at the Oxford Conference. There are many who would assent readily enough, for the sake of unionism and good fellowship. The important part of this article (part of which appeared in the February issue of this paper), is the active obedience of our Lord. To this even the most ardent unionist is not ready to assent. He will accept *sola gratia*, but before the conversation is over, he will insist upon leaving the door slightly ajar for human merit. If we ask him whether we are saved by grace alone, the liberalist will answer affirmatively. If we ask him whether the Lord Jesus kept the Law so fully and so completely that there is positively nothing for us to do by way of merit, he will not agree that He did.

This Perfect Obedience cannot be separated from *sola gratia*. The two stand and fall together. The liberal who denies the latter self-evidently is denying the former. If he is straight on both points, it will straighten out his thinking on other points. He will be straight on the doctrine of the fall of man, and on original sin. He will be straight on the meaning and purpose of the Law, and all its implications. He will be sound in regard to the Virgin Birth and the Deity of our Lord. He will accept the entire plan of Redemption, omitting nothing. He will think straightly on Anthropologia and on Soteriologia. Moreover, he will be sound in practice. The basic objection to the secret orders is not their secrets, but the fact that they find merit in living up to moral principles, rather than throwing themselves wholly upon the grace of God in our Saviour. The objection to Rome is not that she employs ancient forms of worship, but that in her Sacrifice of the Mass, the prayers of men become an enacting clause, and give proper form and efficacy to the Means of Grace. Rome stresses faith, but she teaches that there is equal merit in fastings and prayers. Without the latter the former is valueless, she says.

The sectarians stand on identical ground. They believe that a prayer meeting is more valuable than a preaching service. This heresy is by no means unknown among us of late. The writer has heard sermons in our own circles in which sin is pictured in all its blackness, and those who are in terror because of sin are urged to pray without ceasing. Even the poor, unlettered Billy Bray, the famous Cornish lay preacher of a century ago knew better. He wrestled and prayed for a long time, and with

no assurance of salvation. It was only after he spent an hour or two every evening reading the Scriptures that he became convinced that his salvation was sure. The first Lord Halifax, a singularly faithful man, was not sure to his dying day that salvation was accomplished centuries ago.

If there is a real change of attitude on the part of those who formerly accepted *intuitu fidei* and spoke of a favorable attitude of the sinner toward the call to grace, then let them make a manly retraction. Here Luther showed us the way. When the renegade Bucer was flitting all over Europe on unionistic errands, Luther laid down an ultimatum: If the Zwinglians have really had a change of heart, it is not enough merely to say so. Let them sign an honest retraction of their former errors. This, of course, they were unwilling and unready to do, despite Geneva's and Strassbourg's ardent professions of agreement in doctrine. (See the recent exhaustive life of Martin Bucer, by Eels.)

If the liberals in other church bodies (and in our own midst) really have come to a sound position as they say, then Luther's way is the logical one: Let them make an honest retraction of their former errors.

—F. R. W.

## • LUTHERAN UNION?

### A Case Of Sanity And Charity Plus—

(Continued)

#### AN OLD TECHNIQUE

The writer of the article which we are discussing does not seem to believe in the old technique to which we have already referred and which we now intend to discuss somewhat more fully. For, as attempts are made to apply this technique in the present controversy, he complains of “standards of criticism which must make not only the agreement of 1938, but every agreement that can possibly be devised, to appear like intentional fraud.” And he then goes on to explain:

“The argument which has been directed against the union agreement and statements published since that time is based on the major premise that no sentence or phrase can be declared acceptable so long as standing by itself it permits of an evil interpretation. The formula may also be stated this way: Any sentence or phrase that can be understood in an evil sense must be so understood. This implies, of course, that any omission will be viewed as intentional, as a denial of some truth. It is not my purpose to suggest that this is the standard of criticism which the authors of these pamphlets and resolutions have set themselves.”

This strikes us as being a rather completely negative approach to the whole problem which is under discussion. However, let us see whether what some of us want is such an altogether new technique.

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For nearly two thousand years there has been such a thing as a Christian confessional principle—a principle the roots of which are firmly embedded in the solid soil of Scripture. And during all of this time there has been such a thing as a confessional method, a method which is likewise both Scriptural and historical—historical in the sense that it has behind it the sanction of centuries of unvarying,

unwavering, and unvacillating usage on the part of the church—not to introduce the fundamental question of elementary logic. That method demands in any confession: pertinence, clarity, adequacy, comprehensiveness, unambiguity, unequivocalness, and the unmistakable recognition of error as well as its complete rejection in no uncertain terms.

Let us illustrate, and at the same time substantiate.

When the Apostles' Creed, after three centuries of Christian witness-bearing, no longer proved sufficient as an instrument of confession within the Christian Church, because of the controversy precipitated within its pale by the false teaching of Arius, who denied the true Deity of Christ, the Nicene Creed gave emphasis to the truth of the doctrine in dispute, in the words: "I believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten before the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made." Behind such explicit phraseology no error could hide, least of all that which was in dispute. No Arianism could conceal itself, like a hidden stowaway, behind such words. The Athanasian Creed, which may for practical purposes be considered as being of contemporary origin, similarly predicates "one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, or the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father; by whom all things were made." Ghost." Such a declaration left no room for doubt or denial as concerns the true nature of Christ.

When the need for a new confession arose in Reformation Days, to declare the truth rediscovered by Lutheran Protestantism over against decayed Roman Catholicism, the Augustana was produced. This Confession again points the way which is to be followed in any endeavor to settle disputes within the Church. And what is that way? Not only does this first and fundamental Confession of Lutheranism in the first of its two main divisions, its Statement of the Chief Articles of Faith, posit a clear and unmistakable thesis as regards each doctrine in question, accompanied in most instances by an effective antithesis also; but in addition, in what might almost seem to be a work of superfluity, it devotes a second whole main portion to a specific setting forth of Articles. **In Which Are Reviewed the Abuses Which Have Been Corrected, by the testimony of Lutheranism.**

Or when again, somewhat later, the mere acceptance of the Augsburg Confession no longer sufficed as a clear test of Lutheran orthodoxy and loyalty, because of Melancthon's constant alterations and because of the various controversies which had arisen within the Lutheran Church itself, the Formula of Concord was the eventual outcome. Just what, in the main, is its character? In view of the fact that subtler differences were in question than had been the case in previous controversies, this instrument of confessionalism painstakingly epitomizes the state of controversy in each instance, that is to say, with reference to each single doctrine in dispute; and then it as often first sets forth affirmatively the pure teaching concerning it, and after that, finally, it antithetically brings a clear and definite rejection of false, opposite dogmas.

In his classical work, **The Conservative Reformation and its Theology**, in which he discusses the conservative Lutheran spirit over against the "other" radical spirit of the Reformed Church, Krauth rightly says: "The conservatism of the Lutheran Church exalted, above all, pure doctrine as the divine pre-supposition of faith. While the Church of England (which he discusses, as that part of the Reformed Church for which most affinity with the conservatism of Lutheranism is usually claimed, and the unique eclecticism of which was brought about to some extent by the Lutheran influence of the mediating Bucer and the later Melancthon) stated doctrines so that men understood its utterances in different ways. The Lutheran Church tried so to state them that men could accept them in but one sense. If one expression was found inadequate for this, she gave another." And as a result, he can add: "The Lutheran Church has her Book of Concord, the most explicit Confession ever made in Christendom; the Church of England has her Thirty-Nine Articles, the least explicit among the official utterances of the Churches of the Reformation."

What else should one expect, if the classical definition of confessional symbols as given by the Formula of Concord be accepted, that they are "a testimony and declaration of the faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles in controversy in the Church of God by those then living, and how the opposite dogma was rejected and condemned"?

The drafting of Creeds and Confessions is too weighty a thing to be considered or undertaken and executed lightly. It is not something akin to the cultivation of mushrooms, which may be observed to be going on in one or another cellar any old time. It is a serious and sacred business, arising out of sheer historical necessity in the life of the Church, or in that of any given church, but one in many generations, as a rule. The primitive Church got along with three generally accepted Creeds, the Church of the Reformation found six Confessions enough, and the Missouri Synod has seen the need to draw up but one Brief Statement to date. Once such creeds, confessions, and synodical statements are accepted, they are in the very nature of things of the utmost consequence for all future generations. Careless work, slipshod methods, ill-considered statements, indifferent phrasing, dubious terminology, double-headed predications, studied ambiguities, cunning disguise, deceitful circumvention, and sly evasion have no place and are not to be tolerated in such a situation as that. There is every reason why each word should be most carefully and painstakingly weighed and chosen at such a time.

Can there be any good reason why this should not be the case?

Luther discusses this question in his inimitable way, in one of his most erudite and most carefully composed treatises, namely, that "Concerning Councils and Churches," written in 1539. He likewise illustrates this point, in a most striking manner, with the example of the Nicene Creed. If it has ever seemed unbelievable to anyone that there was a real necessity for this major Creed of Christendom to heap its expressions in the striking manner in which it does this, then let him read what Luther relates, St. Louis Edition, XVI, 2208-2214. This will prove most revealing and instructive. We regret that we have not the space to reproduce this classical passage in its entirety here. Walther has

included it, under the heading, "False Teachers Are Not To Be Trusted, Even Though They Make An Honest and Complete Retraction of Their Error." *Lehre und Wehre*, XIV (1868), pp. 376-380. He accompanies the quotation with some pertinent remarks, one of which reads: "May this only be taken to heart by all of those who are immediately for making peace, when the opponents of the pure doctrine but halfway begin to speak in such a manner as to make it possible to interpret well what they say. If that had been the spirit of the old fathers then the pure doctrine which is worth more than heaven and earth would, so far as they are concerned, have been lost already more than a thousand years ago." Another thing which he adds will bear emphasis today, viz.,—this: "It is not enough simply to approve of a proper confession. If this has been done, well and good. But then everything has to be put in order in conformity with it, and an endeavor made to let one's practice be in accordance with what goes with pure doctrine. Otherwise an oral and signed confession is nothing but a sham intended to rid one's neck of the uncomfortable counter-testimony of the orthodox and to stop their mouths."

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It is one of the purposes of Creeds, Confessions, and synodical statements to obviate the necessity of constantly repeated, perennial controversy. (Another purpose is to make clear to the Church's ministers what they are to teach and preach, and to its laity what they are to expect in this way.)

This purpose is illustrated by an incident which occurred during the course of the colloquy between representatives of the old Iowa Synod on the one hand and the Missouri Synod on the other hand, back in 1867. The discussion regarding the respective attitude of these synods toward the Lutheran Symbols, and especially of the former's modern theory of "open questions" had seemingly reached an impasse, when inspector Grossmann, who was acting as moderator at the time, and who represented the Iowa side, felt himself induced to declare: "I believe we can discontinue the discussion regarding this matter. It has become evident that there exists here a difference which cannot be removed. Incidentally," he added, as he addressed himself to the Missourians, "it will no doubt have become clear to you by now, that we do not intend to provide an open door for the entrance of false spirits." Walther replied: "If you indeed do not intend to leave an open door, you certainly are making a hole in the wall, through which false spirits can steal their way in." Grossmann countered: "Ah, but then we shall still be standing guard before it." To which Walther protested again in turn: "That will indeed not help you at all."

Have we not already at St. Louis—we mean even before the adoption of the union articles of 1938—found it necessary to look to our watchmen, the members of our reviewing committee, No. 16, as well as to our Union Committee, standing guard at the numerous crevices in our new confessional wall, in order to safeguard our precious doctrine? Witness the report of Committee 16, which in itself constitutes part of the adopted basis for union: "While the phraseology employed (viz., by one of the component parts of this multiple basis, i. e., the A. L. C. Declaration), was sometimes not that which we use, we feel, especially in view of the explanations by our Committee on Lutheran Union that these statements contain the truth," etc. (*Proceedings of the 87th*

*Regular Convention*, p. 231.) A confessional statement, meant to safeguard a church's most precious heritage, should in the very nature of things be of such a character that it need not, in seeking to make such a provision, at the very outset depend on the feelings of a committee, which feelings are in their turn again based on the assurances of a second committee whatever the extent of the reliability of the latter may be. To say that this is expecting too much, reminds us of the rather trenchant, yet not wholly improper, suggestion that one might in a contrary case simply set up an alphabet, leaving it to God and to men so to arrange its various letters as to give the necessary and desired sense (*Goesswein, Eine Union in der Wahrheit*, p. 103.)

The whole situation which confronts us today has been very well described thousands of years ago by the prophet Ezekiel. For history keeps repeating itself, as Solomon long ago reminded us, Eccl. 1, 9, so that what is occurring today has through past centuries been enacted and re-enacted time and again in the life of the Church and of men.

The Church, and alas, also the Lutheran Church of today, has its prophets who prophesy out of their own hearts, and whose work, whether they know it and acknowledge it or not, is like that of cunning foxes who secretly destroy the Church's already partially ruined confessional walls. To speak more concretely, and with reference to the case immediately before us, neological subjective phantasies peer out of almost every statement of the A. L. C. Declaration. The work of a true prophet in such a situation is outlined in Ezek. 13, 1-3: "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the Word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord, woe unto foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!" (That is to say, whose proclamations are not based upon divine revelation. The Scriptures regularly speak of that as sinful folly, which is contrary to the divine wisdom of the Word, whether it be the written Word or the living Word, Christ; Prov. 1, 7; I Cor. 1, 25.) As for the self-delusion or pretension on the part of some, that they think to see their findings "indicated" in God's Word, that, too, has its answer in Ezekiel, when it is said: "They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, the Lord saith; and the Lord hath not sent them." (V. 6.) Yet, if "they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word," such hope has not been in vain. For there have been those among us who are all too ready to join in "seducing God's people, saying Peace; and there was no peace." (V. 10.) Such reassuring voices disarmed our Union Committee and our Reviewing Committee 16, when they should have looked to the confessional gaps and "made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord." For as we view the work of these respective committees, we can only say: "One built up a slight wall (marginal reading: that is, an unsound, insufficient wall), and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar." (V. 10.)

Alas, such a wall cannot stand. The Lord will rend it with a stormy wind in His fury. And when it shall have been broken down and brought to the ground, and its foundations discovered, it will be seen that there was every reason for doing so. For its foundations are not the true Christian foundation of *sola gratia* and *sola Scriptura*. What disturbs us more particularly just now, however, is

the question: what shall then have become of our own Israel?

It can only add to one's concern that while there are "prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace," (V. 16.), others are busy "making caps for heads of every size to catch souls" (i. e., thick coverings, for the heads of all men, no matter what their status and stature, so that they fit each individual case, and keep the persons concerned from hearing and seeing the truth and the effect of the truth upon others; v. 18. Cp. *Popular Commentary*.)

In short, a situation has been brought about, which can best be summarized in the words of the prophet: "Ye have made the heart of the righteous sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, or by promising his life." It amounts to this: Perversion of Christian truth "need not be divisive" of Christian fellowship.

If it is the purpose of ecclesiastical confessions to repudiate error, particularly such specific error as past and present circumstances indicate are to be guarded against, not to mention future probabilities, it lies in the very nature of things that times of controversy, far from suggesting the desirability of a relinquishment or relaxation of stringency, make the requirement for precise and indubitable formulation of confessions even more imperative. (Cp. Walther, *Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p. 137; 239.) Merely to patch a new piece of cloth to an old garment in attempting to remedy an evil matter in such a situation can but cause a worse rent, and thus make matters all the more serious in the end.

Walther already pointed out the important bearing in this connection of the principle that "it is not where it begins that error leaves off." He rightly says: "The danger of any error is not to be calculated according to the likely good intention of the one who harbors it, but according to the misuse which some evil-minded one may make of it and according to the extent to which it must lead if followed to its logical conclusion." (Loc. cit., p. 134.)

What else than all of this did the Apostle Paul mean to say when he wrote to young Timothy: "Hold fast the form of sound words," II Tim. 1, 13; and again: "if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words. . . he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting (morbid) about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings (or constant friction)?" I Tim. 6, 3-5.

To put it thus: why refuse the services of a perfectly reliable life-boat when one is invited in, and continue to trust oneself to an old raft, many parts of which are evidently unsound and which has by experience proved itself unsafe, even though it may now have been patched up a bit?

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One thing more.

The statement at the head of this section spoke of an unreasonable argument, based on the major premise that no sentence or phrase can be declared acceptable so long as "standing by itself" it permits of an evil interpretation.

Now, certainly, the last thing in the world that we would want to do would be to interpret confes-

sional statements as they stand by themselves, without reference to their confessors, and the whole of their past and present background, not to speak of future probabilities. That would be contrary to all sound sense, to the very nature of confessionalism, and to the whole of the Church's historical experience and practice. Such a procedure could result in but one thing: hopeless confusion.

We rather believe in the correctness of what H. E. Jacobs has long ago nicely said: "If the principle be correct that the biography of a man cannot be properly written without tracing his ancestry and examining the influences that have contributed, long before his birth, to the formation of his character, it is no less true that. . . no communion can be absolutely sundered from its past history. The historical standpoint must always be the basis of all enduring practical work. We cannot deal successfully with men unless we know who they are, and whence they come, and what they mean. The historical antecedents and relations and development must be appreciated and recognized before any results can be expected from the kindly feeling and earnest efforts of even the warmest advocates of Christian union. A candid and discriminating view of its precise historical situation on the part of those upon whom rests the responsibility for leadership is an indispensable prerequisite to all progress within a church." (*History of the Ev. Luth. Church in the United States*, p. 1.) We believe our Union Committee is right in insisting on this principle over against the Pittsburgh agreement between the U. L. C. and the A. L. C. when it says that it found the statement on inspiration which purportedly established agreement between these two bodies to be "ambiguous," and to "lack the explicit, unequivocal declaration of the verbal inspiration and of the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures in all its parts **which the situation demands.**" (Bold type is ours.) And we believe we are right in insisting on the application of this same principle to the Missouri-A. L. C. situation.

If we are willing to apply this principle to the situation in hand, however, honesty compels us to say that we cannot escape the conclusion that there is every reason for distrust as to the confessional statements of those with whom we are dealing, in view of the present situation, not to speak of the past, and much less of future probabilities. (Cp. e. g. *Conc. Theol. Monthly*, Nov., 1939, p. 878f, to cite but one instance of proof at this time; one which, however, touches the very heart of the matter: *sola gratia*.)

There is but one thing that can prove helpful in such a situation, and its place can be taken by nothing else. This one thing is an unconditional renunciation of present and past false positions, practices, and affiliations, and that in no uncertain terms. Scriptural ground for such a requirement? "Confess your faults one to another," James 5, 15, should suffice.

Walther reminds us: "You know in what manner the Church has always dealt with its teachers, when they adhered to errors which are contrary to the foundation of the faith. She could then not accept the fairest assurances, if she did not have the certainty that they did not after all still associate with these the old opinions. The Church never found it possible to trust such men." (Beyer, *Missouri-Iowa Colloquy*, p. 157; cp. also p. 174f.)



This insistence that former errors are to be specifically renounced is so well founded and so well established a principle of confessionalism, that we are not ready to give it up, least of all in these trying times when deception is so much the order of the day that it seems to be part of the very air which we breathe, and when as a result nearly everything which we once thought stood firm about us seems to be crashing down about our ears.

Lacking the application of this principle, we can only say of declarations like that of the A. L. C. what Walther was honest enough to say of similar assurances of his day (history bore out the justice of his reproof): that they make the impression of confessional instruments which are meant to deceive. His exact words on one occasion were: "You will in any case not maintain that you have used no capacious expressions. I tell you, your language has often seemed to us to be meant to lead us about by the nose." (*Milwaukee Colloquy*, p. 66.) His honest Saxon words will then still have to stand: "The conflict is becoming ever more subtle, by virtue of the fact that the spirit of falseness borne along by the trend of the time, is always dressing itself up in a more orthodox fashion." "Our opponents as a matter of principle do not want any unity in doctrine and have evidently only approached us in order to give themselves the appearance of lovers of peace." Or again: "They have made not inconsiderable retrogressions. . . only that they have in such a manner set everything on jackscrews that one will be able to tell only in the future to what extent their declarations and concessions have been honestly meant." Or one can then still again be sure that there is every reason to say what Walther in his day said of the Reading Agreement (at the constituting assembly of the proposed General Council, in 1866): "It is true, the resolutions are for the most part very fine, but one becomes alarmed when one considers who has subscribed to them. . . I pity such excellent people as Krauth, Krotel, Schaeffer, etc., because they were so weak as to seek strength through union with such elements." (*Walther's Briefe*, II, p. 99; 112; 119; 71. The whole of the correspondence of Walther which was written at this time, pp. 99-120, is interesting and instructive, especially when read in conjunction with the stenographic report of the Mo.-Iowa Colloquy at Milwaukee by Beyer.)

From all that has been said, this much, if nothing else, ought at least to be clear now, that the confessional method on the application of which many of us continue to insist, far from representing a new technique, is as old as the Church itself, if not as old as the hills.

There is something new in this controversy, however, at least so far as its existence among us is concerned. It is the attempted application of a method which our critics have introduced from elsewhere and by which they would like to see this present union controversy settled. We shall next speak of this.

(To Be Continued)

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

## • A Preface To Communism & Socialism

"The real and sole and profoundest theme in the history of the world and of man, to which all others are subordinate, will ever remain the conflict of faith and unbelief."  
—Goethe

\* \* \* \*

### The Great Red Menace

"A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exercise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies." . . . But "Communism is already acknowledged by all European powers to be itself a power."

With these ominous words the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, prepared by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, made its appearance in 1848. And it closed with the solemn assurance:—

"Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, unite!"

That was ninety years ago.

And today?

Already there is every reason to say that this modern revolt of the godless will in its ultimate reaches prove perhaps more than comparable with the persecution of primitive Christianity by the classic pagan world, the scourge of Islam in its day, and the antichristian institutions and inquisitions of the Middle Ages.

The question fairly forces itself upon one: have we in this present-day phenomenon the fulfilment in a high degree of the prediction of Ezekiel concerning Gog and Magog, Chap. 38 and 39, and of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, Chap. 20, 7-10? Are we to recognize in it a major factor in the last great assault on Christ and His kingdom which is to represent the last great plague of mankind before the end of time?—Cp. Dr. L. Fuerbringer in *Conc. Theol. Monthly*, Vol. VIII, No. 5 (May, 1937), pp. 331-343; C. M. Zorn, *Offenb. St. Johann's*, pp. 302-342; F. Schumm, *Essay on Revelation*, Ch. 20.

There can be no doubt as to the fact that Communism is a real menace and a grave one, worldwide in scope, threatening our very civilization, our own national life by no means excepted. It is not a mere bugaboo—as it is sometimes represented to be by its own devotees, in order to ensnare the unwary; and as it is too often foolishly supposed to be by "them that dwell carelessly" on earth.

Within recent months recognition of the menace of Communism has been accentuated by developments in Europe, by the intrigues of Stalin and their reverberations in all the capitals of the world, by Communistic activities in France and in Asiatic countries, and so far as America is concerned, especially by the revelations of the Dies Committee. It is well that this is so, for the Moscovite Menace cannot be simply ignored, much less laughed off. But it can be squarely met, by an intelligent campaign of information, education, and vigilant preparedness.

It is the purpose of the present lines to make some contribution toward that end in our own midst,

In our discussion, Communism's and Socialism's own primary sources relative to questions in hand have been consulted almost to the exclusion of others, and thus their own rasping voice will for the most part be heard. This should make the substance of what we have to say all the more convincing and impressive.

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## Communism And Socialism

What is the difference between Communism and Socialism?

While we do not want to go into this question at any great length at this time, it will be necessary to make at least a few remarks regarding it. For it is a question which must necessarily be asked sooner or later, as often as either of these subjects comes up for discussion.

Communists themselves will simply tell you—and quite correctly—that modern Communism and modern Socialism are the twin offspring of one and the same brain, viz., that of Karl Marx, but that the former is his legitimate and the latter a bastard child. Marxists in fact use the two terms, Communism and Socialism interchangeably. They insist, however, that Communism is scientific Socialism, and that Socialism is utopian Communism. Communism may well be defined as articulated Socialism, and Socialism as inarticulate Communism. Heywood Brown, himself an avowed radical, once defined a Communist as “a Socialist in a hurry.” One might rightly say that Communism is Socialism with a capital “S,” while Socialism is a rarified kind of Communism. Fundamentally, there is no difference between the two. Communism is simply the *ne plus ultra* of modern socialistic ideology.

It is true that one can well concede a number of relative differences between these two fundamentally allied and widespread philosophies of our day. Thus one is, in theory at least, international, while the other may be but national or even local in scope. One of them is insistent on the necessity of operation by force; the other does not always emphasize this necessity as insistently. There is a constant and unvarying emphasis on the anti-religious note in the case of the one; while in that of the other this note may not always be so dominantly in the foreground. In the economic field one emphasizes merely the socialization of the production of goods; the other, that of its distribution and consumption as well. But with all these differences it will still be found that the question is always essentially one of difference as to degree rather than as to kind. Both are totalitarian, and about the only real question is just how far anyone who calls himself a Socialist (there are hardly any two who are wholly alike) has been drawn into the maelstrom of Marxian thought.

Once this fundamental fact is kept in mind, anyone who would not want to be a Communist will not readily toy with the idea of being a Socialist of any stripe whatsoever.

Yet it is really alarming to see to what an extent Socialistic thought processes have infiltrated the minds of many even within our own Church, and how little some of our best Christians are sometimes on their guard against this insidious foe of the last days. A cursory examination even of one or the other of the free-lance journals published in our own midst, as well as daily contact with people about us will soon bear out the truth of this statement.

## A Synodical Footnote to Communism and Socialism

It will be noted that modern Communism originated in the days of our synodical fathers, the organization of the Missouri Synod taking place in 1847. While the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was published in 1848.

In this connection it would be interesting, by the way, to discuss the early history of our Saxon fathers, noting the bitter experience of Socialistic oppression, involving even virtual dictatorship and communalism, through which they had to pass, before they came into the prized possession of the truth that makes one free and of that spirit of democracy which necessarily goes with it. No wonder that Walther and others later so jealously guarded their hard-bought liberty until their dying day!

In 1877 a small Communist sheet made its appearance in St. Louis. Although Communism was not very vocal as to its essentially anti-religious character in those days, and Walther was therefore perhaps excusably unaware of the full import of those of its teachings which are no longer hidden under a bushel today, yet he recognized its anti-Christian program and that same winter delivered a series of addresses to his congregation in order to point out the hostility of this program to the Church and to religion. Discussing its logical fallacies with reference to what Communists put into the foreground in those days, namely, its antagonism to the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Commandments, he demonstrated the falseness of the charge that the Church is a friend of oppression. These lectures were published in our official printshop under the title *Communism and Socialism* in 1878 (Second Edition in 1886.)

In 1886 a second series of lectures—*Ueber Arbeiterverbindungen: Verhandlungen der St. Louiser Gesamtgemeinde*—was published over the signature of Rev. Geo. Stoeckhardt, with a concluding word by Dr. Walther, by Concordia Publishing House. In 1894 a theoretical discussion, *Zur Arbeiterfrage*, written by Dr. A. L. Graebner, was published by our synodical press. In the following year Dr. Graebner once more presented a practical series of three lectures before the various St. Louis congregations, which were subsequently published in tract form: *Die heutigen Arbeiterverbindungen und die christliche Ortsgemeinde*. C. P. H., 1895.

A glance at the subjects “Communism” and “Socialism” in Eckhardt's *Lexicon* will show the rather thorough ventilation which these subjects were constantly given in our synodical literature during the past.

All of this not only goes to show how alert our fathers were over against every movement that menaced their faith; but it also points the way for us today. For if Communism and Socialism were subjects for congregational and conference discussion then, how much more is this true today.

To quote an expression found in the *Lutheran Witness*—

“Communism has not changed in these fifty years. As Rev. H. F. Meyer of Ashville, N. C., said to his people in a sermon last month: ‘With Communism—which declares, “We hate Christianity and Christians. Down with love of our neighbor! What we want is hatred. We will grapple with the Lord in due season. We shall

vanquish Him in His highest heaven"—those who bear the name of Christ can have no alliance.' And we add: Against such an enemy the Church cannot permit her tongue and pen to be silenced by any considerations whatsoever." Vol. LV, No. 20 (Oct. 6, 1936), p. 330.

## • Telling The Tide Of Battle

"You cannot please the Liberals more than by making the distinction between essentials and peripheral doctrines for the purpose of declaring the latter to be evanescent and subject to change. When the Liberals hear the Conservatives say: 'Fundamentals are binding, but not the non-fundamentals,' they know the battle is going their way."—Dr. Th. Engelder, in *Conc. Theol. Monthly*, Vol. X, No. 11, p. 842.

## • The Three Stages Of Error

"When error is admitted into the Church, it will be found that the stages of its progress are always three.

"It begins by asking **toleration**. Its friends say to the majority: you need not be afraid of us; we are few, and weak; only let us alone; we shall not disturb the faith of others. The Church has her standards of doctrine; of course we shall never interfere with them; we only ask for ourselves to be spared interference with our private opinions.

"Indulged in this for a time, error goes on to assert **equal rights**. Truth and error are two balancing forces. The Church shall do nothing which looks like deciding between them; that would be partiality. It is bigotry to assert any superior right for the truth. We are to agree to differ, and any favoring of the truth, because it is truth, is partisanship. What the friends of truth and error hold in common is fundamental. Anything on which they differ is **ipso facto** non-essential. Anybody who takes account of such a thing is a disturber of the peace of the Church. Truth and error are two coordinate powers, and the great secret of church-statesmanship is to preserve the balance between them.

"From this point error soon goes on to its natural end, which is to assert **supremacy**. Truth started with tolerating: it comes to be merely tolerated, and that only for a time. Error claims a preference for its judgments on all disputed points. It puts men into positions, not as at first in spite of their departure from the Church's faith, but in consequence of it. Their recommendation is that they repudiate that faith, and position is given them to teach others to repudiate it, and to make them skilful in combating it."—C. P. Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, p. 195f. Cp. also *Lutheran Witness*, Vol. LIV, No. 2, (Jan. 15, 1935), p. 18f.

## • For The Record

Editorial agreement of the *Lutheran Witness* with the principle underlying the issuance of the *Confessional Lutheran* is noted. Vol. LIX, No. 5 (March 5, 1940), p. 75f. Simply stated that principle is: truth must prevail, whatever it may be and wherever its testimony may come from. We hope everyone in our Synod still believes that. The Scriptural reply to all "crackdown" critics is found in John 7, 51; also in Acts 4, 19f and 5, 38f. "The Pope is God's servant, but he is not God's servant for American national life." This statement was includ-

ed in a protest given to the press, against the action of President Roosevelt in sending a personal representative to the Vatican, by Dr. Em. Poppen, President of A. L. C., and Dr. F. H. Knubel, President of the U. L. C., while together in Columbus at a meeting of the American Section of the Lutheran World Convention. It is reproduced as a news item in the *Lutheran Standard* (A. L. C.) in its issue of Jan. 20. God's servant or Antichrist? That is the question raised by this statement. . . . The Wisconsin Synod Committee which met with our Union Committee in January found no reason why it should recede from the position taken in 1939. . . . The same goes for the Norwegian Synod committee. . . . A series of Mid-Day Lenten Services announced to be held at the Erlanger Theatre, Chicago, includes in its program of speakers men of the U. L. C., the A. L. C., the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Swedish Augustana Synod, and others. Rev. A. C. Piepkorn (Missouri) was announced as the speaker for February 19-23. . . . The Dean of our St. Louis Seminary, is reported to have impressed the senior class recently with the timely warning that our Synod is facing two great dangers today: 1) loss of the pure Word; 2) an indifferent ministry. . . . *Sicut patribus, sit Deus nobis!*

## • On Being Branded A Sect

"May it be even so that we are here and there viewed and treated as a harmful sect—it is enough if the Lord counts us among that little flock, to which also the Apostle Paul was not ashamed to belong when he declared in his defence before the Roman governor: 'This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call **heresy**, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing ALL things which are written in the law and in the prophets. . . . And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.' Acts. 24, 14; 16. As long as the Lord numbers us among this little flock, we shall be a **blessing** to our fatherland, and this will neither remain altogether concealed." —F. Lochner, *Epistelpredigten*, p. 818.

## Coming Issues

The leading article in our next issue will answer the question What is Fundamental Unity. The article on Traditionalism announced for this issue had to be held back for the April number of the *Confessional Lutheran*. The next installment in the Lutheran Union series will bring an article on A New Formula of Concord. A concise and historical Definition of Separatism and Sectarianism will be another feature. Space permitting, there will be another installment of the column For The Record, and the Question Box will be resumed. The section on Communism and Socialism will be devoted to answering the question, What Is Communism?

\* \* \* \*

(Additional copies of this issue of the *Confessional Lutheran* may be had at 5c per copy, or in quantities at the special rate of \$1.00 per fifty, postpaid, if ordered within fifteen days after date of publication, after which the printer's forms will be destroyed. Only subscribers and contributors are assured copies of every issue. All subscriptions and inquiries should be addressed to, Rev. A. E. Beck, Business Manager, Foley, Minnesota.)

# THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF, Editor  
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REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager  
Foley, Minnesota

"The Confessional Lutheran" is a venture of faith. While the intention is to publish the periodical monthly, it will regularly go to press only so long as the necessary support warrants this. Subscription: One Dollar per Year. Larger amounts are welcome.

Vol. I

April, 1940

No. 4

IN THIS ISSUE: "Either A True Concord Or None At All"—Walther's Theses On The Modern Theory Of Open Questions—Lutheran Union: A Correction—For The Record—Mo.-A. L. C. Conferences—Unionistic Prayer-Fellowship—What Is Marxianism?—Rom. 16, 17—Recommended Reading—Defining Separatism And Sectarianism—Quaedam Levia Errata

## • "Either A True Concord, Or None At All"

Luther To Bucer

(St. L. Edit., 2094)

What is going to be said here is one of a number of things which have been held back for some time. It has to do with the pamphlet which titles itself *The Historical Lutheran Position in Non-Fundamentals*. Challenges and provocations have been based on this pamphlet, some of which are found in *The American Lutheran* for Jan., 1940, pp. 3, 8; March, pp. 6, 28ff; Dec., 1939, p. 3. Other instances might be cited.

This pamphlet will later be discussed in full. This must be done. For this little publication, of which some in our midst are making so much, seems to impair the Scriptural foundation; misunderstands historical facts with reference to Luther, particularly as regards the Luther-Bucer situation, and the testimony of the Lutheran dogmaticians generally; and especially misrepresents the position of our own Dr. C. F. W. Walther of blessed memory (Hebr. 13, 7.) The author has read Walther—it seems—in a subjective way, and thus we are not getting Walther's real position.

In contending against the identical unionistic movement which we are called on to face once more today (based on an unhistorical definition of "open questions," or the toleration of erroneous teachings which are supposedly "non-divisive" of Christian fellowship), Walther, in the classical essay which he has left us on this subject, has said—

According to this false theory "not only theological problems and matters which are at least of a problematical nature, but also such teachings as are, either positively or negatively, incontrovertibly decided in God's Word are made to be open questions and legitimization claimed for their affirmation as well as for their negation within the Lutheran Church.

"We can by no means make this theory our own. We must rather most decidedly reject it as one which is syncretistic, unionistic, indifferentistic, and which violates the majesty of

God's Word. We can regard and treat as an open question no teaching which is clearly taught in God's Word or which contradicts God's clear Word, though the same appears to be, or actually is, one that is ever so subordinate and that lies ever so far off from the center of saving doctrine, in its periphery.

"Now, by this we do not want to say in the first place that as soon as there becomes evident, as to any member of the church, any error clearly militating against God's Word\*—that ecclesiastical fellowship with him must then at once be terminated." *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. XIV, No. 3 (March, 1868), p. 66. (All emphases are Walther's.)

This is a clear and unmistakable testimony against unionism, which, like an alarm-bell, comes ringing down these decades to rouse a Church while there is danger that its structure is being undermined and its most precious treasures are being carried off.

From this testimony the pamphlet in question quotes the portion which has been emphasized, omitting the important "one that is ever so subordinate . . . in its periphery." It then goes on, ostensibly still citing literally our great Missourian father—

"This does not mean, however, that we are at once to declare fraternal relations severed with any member of the Church who is teaching falsely, even though he hold an error clearly contradicting the Word of God." *The Historical Lutheran Position in Non-Fundamentals*, pp. 21ff.

A comparison of either the original text of Walther, or of our accurate translation, as given above, will show that the words which the present writer has emphasized are interpolated, the first four being absolutely imported, while the last two should read "as soon as." This wholly changes the meaning of what Walther actually said, making it exactly the sort of thing Walther meant to discontinue by his testimony. If anyone is not convinced of this, then let him read the whole of Walther's words, as well as what he writes on pp. 101ff. (107) in the same

\*Walther's careful use of the objective "militating" here, instead of the more subjective "controversiating" employed impersonally above, is interesting to note.

volume of *Lehre und Wehre*, where he takes up this subject once more and speaks of it more fully. There can be no mistaking Walther's meaning, which is simply this, that we do not excommunicate Church members without further ado when they become guilty of some offense in the way of Christian doctrine any more than we do when one becomes guilty of some offense as to conduct. This is a serious misunderstanding on the part of Dr. Graebner, especially in the present situation, when church union is a live question, as we are living in a time of false unionistic endeavors, and orthodoxy is at a discount in the world.

## • Walther's Theses On The Modern Theory Of Open Questions

(Cp. *Concordia Theological Monthly*, April, 1940)

### SOME INTRODUCTORY CONSIDERATIONS

The *Concordia Theological Monthly*, in its current issue, reproduces Walther's "Propositions on the Modern Theory of Open Questions." *C. T. M.*, XI, 4 (April, 1940), pp. 298ff.

If these theses are thoroughly studied, in the manner in which Walther intended they should be, their consideration and discussion will undoubtedly be productive of much good. We will, in fact, venture to say that in that case any uncertainty and doubt which may exist as to the proper course of procedure in the present union movement will soon be dispelled.

It should be borne in mind that Walther himself was on hand in 1868 to guide the discussion of these theses, which were drawn up for the Pastoral Conference in New Bremen; that he supplied the direction for their discussion in other conferences which may have been held in those days; and that his wise counsel was generally available then. It is also important to remember that these theses merely summarize the excellent material which Walther had presented in earlier issues of the same volume of *Lehre und Wehre* which contain these summary theses. The Foreword of the 1868 *Lehre und Wehre*, running into three brief installments, was specifically directed against the false modern theory of "open" or "non-divisive" questions, and wholly condemns this theory—that is its sole purpose—as a "syncretistic, unionistic, indifferentistic" thing, which "violates the majesty of God's Word." *L. u. W.*, XIV (1868), p. 66. Then followed Walther's masterly essay on "The False Props of the Modern Theory of Open Questions." In this essay, which represents perhaps the finest thing that has been written on this subject at all, Walther knocks the false props—five of them—cut from under this modern theory of open questions, one by one. A summary of these props, together with a reference to Walther's dealing with each in turn, is herewith presented.

**1st Prop:** The Bible is not a legal codex. *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp. 100ff. (*C. T. M.*, April, 1939, pp. 234ff.)

**2nd Prop:** The Church enjoys merely fundamental, not absolute unity, in this life. *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp. 101-114 (*C. T. M.*, April, 1939, pp. 255-262; May, pp. 351-357.)

**3rd Prop:** The pretext that manifestly nothing more belongs to the bond of ecclesiastical unity than unity in those doctrines which are posited in the public Confessions of the Church . . . All else must therefore still belong to open questions. *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp.

129-141; 161-169; 201-211. (*C. T. M.*, June, 1939, pp. 415-420; July, pp. 507-513; August, pp. 587-595; Sept., pp. 656-666.)

**4th Prop:** Appeal to the fact that there are points of doctrine with regard to which even teachers acknowledged as orthodox have erred. *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp. 233-240. (*C. T. M.*, Oct., 1939, pp. 752-759.)

**5th Prop:** The assertion that there are doctrines of faith which are not revealed altogether clearly and unmistakably in God's Word. *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp. 297-305. (*C. T. M.*, Nov., 1939, pp. 827-834.)

(It might still be added that the Missouri-Iowa Colloquy had been held at Milwaukee in the previous year, and that Beyer's stenographic report of this colloquy, as well as Walther's correspondence during this time, sheds further light on the whole situation in question.)

\* \* \* \*

As indicated by the references which have been supplied above, Walther's essay on "The False Props of the Modern Theory of Open Questions" has been reproduced in the *Concordia Theological Monthly*. However, attention should be called to a number of facts which are important with regard to this rendering.

1. Walther's Foreword to *L. u. W.*, XIV, which is in the nature of an important introduction to the essay in question, has not been included in the *Conc. Theol. Monthly* rendering. a) In this Foreword Walther earnestly warns against syncretism (unionism) as the fundamental present ill of Christendom, and as one which ultimately leads to atheism. In doing so, he specifically includes also that type of unionism "which is particularly affecting us Lutherans here in America," viz., "the conservative type, according to which dissenting parties unite into one ecclesiastical fellowship, remaining differences being declared open questions among themselves." *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp. 1-4. b) Walther next shows that one can speak of open questions in the proper sense of the word only if one has in mind questions which are not at all decided in God's Word, either positively or negatively, so that one will be neither adding to, nor subtracting from it. (Mere theological problems, e. g.: on what day Jesus was born, what the stature of children will be in the resurrection, etc.) He sounds the warning that it is a far cry from such a proper, historical distinction of open questions to the modern misconception of it, according to which matters are declared open questions which God has long ago decided in His definitive Word, pp. 33-39. c) Finally Walther characterizes the false modern theory of open questions, restricting his brief discussion to American Lutherans, and more particularly to such among them as still wish to claim Confessional faithfulness. The Iowa Synod is mentioned as the outstanding representative of this theory in America. The following are instanced as points of doctrine which are championed as open or non-divisive questions: the teaching of the Church, the office and power of the keys; of a still-to-be-hoped-for thousand years kingdom, of a still future visible coming of the Lord and a twofold resurrection, of the Sunday, and the like. Walther roundly and rightly renounces this theory in the manner already described. In a concluding word, he refers to his forthcoming essay, in which he promises to show the unsoundness of the arguments by which it is attempted to bolster the validity of constituting doctrines of Scripture, such as those designated, open questions.

2. The **C. T. M.** rendering of Walther's essay does not include a translation of the footnotes which accompany the original text. One of these is very important, both as regards the application of Walther's argument to the situation in hand in his own day and as regards its application today. Cp. **L. u. W., XIV**, pp. 107ff. Others are not unimportant.

3. There are very many important and helpful emphases in Walther's essay which are not reproduced in the **C. T. M.** translation.

For these reasons it is advisable to consult the original text of **L. u. W., XIV**, if at all possible. It may also be added that occasionally the text of the translation is not as clear and striking as the original, although it is on the whole reliable and well done.

\* \* \* \*

If, with all of the above important considerations in hand, the summary theses as published by Walther in **L. u. W., XIV**, pp. 318ff. (**C. T. M.**, April, 1940, p. 298) were to serve conferences as points of departure (*Anhaltspunkte*) for a more thorough discussion of the modern theory of open questions—a purpose which they can excellently serve today also—there can be no question as to what could be the original intention of such a discussion, or what its general character and its ultimate result would be. It is, in fact, to be noted that the very title given the historic fifteen propositions already condemns the false theory of open questions as a bit of modernism, which is seeking to make its way into our Church. Walther's one purpose in presenting all of these theses was to make clear that there can be no open, non-divisive questions in the field of Christian doctrine.

After an introductory thesis. Walther's fifteen propositions fall into two natural divisions. Theses 2-6 are meant to clear away a number of misunderstandings and objections. It may be stated that these theses require somewhat more careful study than those following. However, it is only when they are superficially or carelessly handled, that they can cause any difficulty at all. They are intended to show that while each of the various considerations mentioned in them may in its place serve quite another purpose, none of them can in any case serve to establish even a single open question in the realm of Scriptural doctrine. In Theses 7-14 Walther goes to work directly on the modern theory of open questions, attacking it in such a thorough manner as to leave no doubt as to the outcome of the fray. Thesis 15 brings an earnest concluding word of warning.

The various theses are herewith reproduced with brief comments, which in every instance give the Scriptural and historically Lutheran position of Walther himself, and of our Synodical fathers generally, on the basis of the material with reference to which they were originally drawn up, and with an indication in each case of the pertinent portion of Walther's classic essay, as contained in **L. u. W., XIV**, as well as in **C. T. M.** so far as the material is also found there.

\* \* \* \*

## The Theses

### Thesis I

"It is not to be denied, that there are questions, incidental to religion or theology, which, since they are not answered in God's Word, may be termed open questions in the sense that agreement in answering them does not belong to the unity of faith and teaching demanded in

God's Word, nor to the conditions of ecclesiastical, fraternal, or professional fellowship."

It is to be noted that Walther does not say that it is in the Bible that such questions as he has in mind occur. In fact, he specifically says that they are questions which "are not answered in the Word of God" at all.

He is then not speaking of Scriptural, Christian doctrine in any sense whatsoever. He is merely speaking of questions which, as one ponders religious or theological matters, force themselves on one's attention. Such questions, of course, are and must remain, open questions in the legitimate sense of the word. Their acceptance or rejection can not be made a condition of membership within the Church, or of a fellowshiping of others, or of being permitted to be numbered among the Church's teachers.

Walther treats this question more fully in **L. u. W., XIV**, pp. 33-39. There he defines: "In the specified sense, therefore, all teachings\* are open questions, which are neither positively nor negatively decided by God's Word; or such as to which, if they be affirmed, nothing is affirmed that is denied in Scripture, and by the negation of which nothing is denied that is affirmed in Scripture."

Illustrating to what sort of questions theological problems are thus necessarily restricted, Walther mentions among others, such questions as: in what season of the year the universe was created (Walther of course adhered rigidly to the Biblical account of creation in six ordinary evening-morning days); on what particular day of creation the angels came into being; whether the children of men obtain their soul by creationism or traducianism; whether Mary gave birth to other children than Christ; etc. He vehemently protests against assigning to the field of open questions such matters "as our great God has long ago clearly and plainly decided in His Word."

He specifically warns against including in this category, possibly by virtue of a "gross misunderstanding" which rests on a confusion of theological problems and non-fundamental articles of faith, any of the latter.

Walther later points out that the Iowa Synod even wants such matters as are undeniably fundamental reckoned among open, not ecclesiastically divisive questions. (Cp. above—Church, resurrection, etc.) He moreover calls attention to the fact that the question, whether such evidently fundamental points belong in the category of open questions, constituted the original *status controversiae* between Missouri and Iowa; but that the latter, instead of permitting matters to remain there, chose to shift the controversy to the field of non-fundamentals. He then goes on to say: "We are indeed willing to suffer it to be so, since we also exclude non-fundamental matters from the field of open questions when they are clearly contained in God's Word . . . We are indeed of the conviction that where there is really unity in fundamental matters, non-fundamental matters will not easily become a dividing point, since the latter is possible only then, when a fundamental difference after all still manifests itself as a

\*We advisedly use the word "teaching" with reference to mere human opinion, and avoid the use of the term "doctrine," reserving the latter for Biblical teachings. This is in keeping with Walther's own custom, as well as that of other dogmatists. Walther usually speaks of "Lehre" in the former instance; of "Glaubenslehre" (doctrine, doctrine of faith, comprising the whole Scriptural content, inclusive of historical matters and the like) in the second instance; and of "Glaubensartikel" (articles of faith) when referring to specifically doctrinal matters (*sedes doctrinae*), whether fundamental or non-fundamental.

result of it, namely, denial and subversion of the organic foundation, the authority of the Sacred Scriptures." He concludes: *Principiis obsta*\* That is what guides us in our conflict against the theory of open questions." *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp. 107ff., footnote.

In bringing this thesis to a close, we adduce one more quotation from Walther, as follows:

"We deny that there can be reckoned among the open questions in the orthodox Church anything else than the so-called theological problems and such matters as are of a problematical character; in other words, that there are any open questions in the sense of modern theology. We rather wish to maintain only this that in the orthodox Church legitimization dare be conceded to no error contrary to God's clear Word; that no liberty to depart from God's clear Word dare be given in the orthodox Church, even as to the most insignificant point, whether it be positively or negatively, directly or indirectly; that every such departure from God's clear Word—and if the same consisted even only in the denial that Balaam's ass spoke—demands a proceeding against it within the orthodox Church; and that, when all instruction, admonition, warning, and threatening, and all patience shown toward moving the person or communion concerned to give up their contradiction against God's clear Word, prove fruitless and ineffectual, finally nothing else than excommunication, resp. a schism, can result." Deut. 4, 2; 12, 32. Is. 8, 20; Rev. 22, 19; Gal. 5, 9; John 10, 35; Lk. 24, 25; 2 Tim. 3, 16ff.; Mt. 5, 18ff. *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 68.

Compare Theses 14 and 15 below.

Ref.: *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp. 33-39.

A consideration of this thesis leaves no room for open questions in the field of Christian doctrine.

(To Be Continued)

## • Lutheran Union?

### A Correction

A very disturbing error crept into the last issue of *The Confessional Lutheran*, due to the dropping of a complete line in the printshop, after the proof-reading department had done its final work. It is found on the top of page 14, where the title of a *L. u. W.* article by Dr. Walther should read more fully: "False Teachers Are Not to be Trusted Even Though They Recede Somewhat; Rather Are They to be Pressed Until They Make An Honest and Complete Retraction of Their Error."

We humbly beg pardon, and hasten to make this correction.

It is also hoped that space may be available for the next installment on this subject in the next issue.

## • For The Record

"I was one of the few delegates who dared to vote against adoption of the Report of Committee 16 at the St. Louis Convention. I personally know of at least two others who did likewise: Pastor S. of Minnesota and Mr. G., lay delegate from this circuit. I recall looking over that vast audience when the vote was called (a rising vote was called for immediately), and there was a sprinkling of 'nays' Rev. A. C. W., Ill. . . . There lies before us a letter written by one of the A. L. C. leaders to a Missourian in 1931 which shows conclusively that the former, after accepting the Chicago Theses,

\*Resist the beginnings, sc. of error.

still upheld errors taught by him in previously published anti-Missourian testimonies, and that a leading Missourian who in those years was pressing for union on the basis of the Chicago Theses was evidently deceived by the former and his associates. (Enclose five cents in stamps for copy.) . . . One of our own (Missouri) men, out of conscientious considerations, twice declined the invitation to take part in an A. L. C. summer school at Dubuque, Ia., last year, before one of our leading theologians accepted the same invitation . . . Resolutions of the Pastoral Conference of Greater Chicago, adopted at its regular meeting on March 5, 1940: "Motion made and carried that Dr. Theo. Graebner be invited to our conference to present position on Lutheran Union. Motion made and carried that Rev. Elbert is not to distribute the translation of 'Why Can We Not Hold Common Prayer Service with Ohio or Iowa, or Why Can't We Pray Together with Ohio or Iowa,' until after Dr. Graebner has spoken to us." The secretary of the conference, who was asked to transmit these resolutions to the editor of *The Confessional Lutheran*, adds: "In this connection I may state that our Conference reserves the sole right to publish this our paper. If paper is to be published, our permission must be sought." Pastor Elbert's paper, which was recommended in the February issue of *The Confessional Lutheran*, presents the gist of a fine essay which Dr. F. Bente published in the 1905 volume of *Lehre und Wehre* . . . *The Gamma Delta Spectator*, official organ of the National Association of Lutheran Students (Rev. R. W. Hahn, Advisor) in its January issue brings an article "A Christian Looks at Geology," by Alfred H. Meyer, Associate Professor at Valparaiso University, which concerns itself with "harmonizing specific religious dogma with scientific dogma," and with "attempting a coordinated synthesis of the testimony of God's works with the revelations of God's Word." (Order from Robert Léiberger, Bus. Mgr., 310 Thomas St., Tuscaloosa, Ala. 10cts. per copy.) . . . Replying to an inquiry or two, regarding the connection from which a certain statement appearing in *The Confessional Lutheran* was taken, the statement reads more fully: "Lent bids us give up that we might take up. It commands us to withdraw for six and a half weeks from the distractions of earth to savor the joys of heaven; to discipline our bodies in order to liberate our souls; to deny ourselves that we might have something more to share with others; to cast sin out of our lives to make room for the sanctifying power of Christ's presence; to surrender our own will that through Christ we may repeat after Him, 'Not my will, Father, but Thine be done.'" The statement represents the last paragraph of an article, purporting to set forth the Lutheran view of Lent, which appeared in a large city daily, over the signature of one of our clerics . . . Can someone supply detailed information with regard to the Novenas being held in the New York area? . . . "Our church-body is neither modernist nor fundamentalist, since it accepts the Bible alone and believes that agreement in all its teachings, not only in the fundamentals, is necessary for church-fellowship."—Dr. Theo. Graebner, *Pastor and People*, 1932, p. 25.

## • Mo.-A. L. C. Conferences

"An A. L. C. pastor told me confidentially that he would like to come over to Missouri because of the false doctrine within the A. L. C. A whole number in his conference teach that not the Word as it is



read, but only the preached Word can convert unbelievers. Thus the most diverse tendencies are represented in the A. L. C." G. H. . . . "We have begun a little conference with A. L. C. men here in my region, some five on each side. They have declared Pieper's Brief Statement to be unclear in its article on conversion, as it does not differentiate between the baptized and unbaptized. Upon our reply that a difference is neither to be made here as regards the question of conversion, they countered that we very likely then hold a wrong position as regards the power of baptism. Ill. . . . It is reported by one of the participants that at a conference at Rochelle, Ill., on August 29, last year, President Doerman passionately (krampfhaft) sought to defend the *intuitu fidei*, championing the old false doctrine of Iowa, according to which the universal gracious will of God and the election of grace are really the same, and repeatedly declaring that he does not acknowledge a mystery in the question *cur alii prae aliis*.

## • Unionistic Prayer-Fellowship

"The Una Sancta (The One Holy Christian Church) is and remains invisible, and it is only by their confession that its members become manifest. Therefore all joint ecclesiastical action is dependent on the confession of the participants. If, with reference to this, prayer-fellowship is practiced in spite of acknowledged contrasts in confession, then such action must be branded as unionism."—Prof. J. P. Meyer, "Ist gemeinsames Gebet Kirchengemeinschaft?" *Theol. Quartalschrift*, April, 1940, pp. 131ff.

## • What Is Marxianism?

### A LETTER AND A REPLY

(Note)

The Confessional Lutheran is not an open forum. Literally stacks of commendatory letters have been received, most of which represent fine testimonies, and a number of which have specifically offered themselves for publication. Yet none of these have been given space in our columns. The letter which is to follow, however, and the situation with which it is interwoven are, we believe, of such a nature as to warrant our making room for it. Hence the regular installment on Socialism is being omitted in this issue and this communication is being submitted instead. If we feel compelled to go this mile with the brother in question, however, and publish his letter in accordance with his desires, we feel constrained also to go a second mile and allow ourselves a few words by way of reply. (Mt. 5, 41.) It is our honest concern to gain whomsoever we may.

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### THE LETTER

"In a recent issue of *The Confessional Lutheran* I am called a Marxian prophet. This statement is not true.

"Marx is the father of dialectical materialism. This means that the material side of life brings forth intellectual systems and religious beliefs. I consider this theory absurd.

"Marx believed in an absolute determinism of history. Without discussing the physical science concepts of cause and effect, I can say that no reputable thinker today believes that in the realm of mind and spirit there is anything of the nature of causality observed in the physical sciences.

"Marx believed in the class war as an expression of the dialectic of history. I consider this an oversimplification which robs it of all significance.

"Marx believed in the classless society. This hope I think is idle, man being what he is.

"Marx believed that a true inner society of human fellowship can be achieved through material means. This is a utopian dream. Religion may accomplish it, if it awakens, Marxian materialism cannot.

"So, you see, in all the fundamental positions I do not agree with Marx.

"I emphatically believe, however, that the material, social, and cultural environment plays a part in the success or failure of the visible Church and of the ministry. If you don't believe this, go hungry for awhile, be worried for a while and see how difficult it is to preach a good sermon. After all we are 'in' if not 'of this world.'

"Luther says God might have used the holy angels to spread His Gospel. But He used us men, part of nature and image of God at the same time.

"I quite agree with you that our great danger lies in the trend toward an autocratic instead of an evangelical church organization. The reason first lies in the social pressures of our day. External organization, finance, administration are growing. Their nature is to use compulsion instead of the Gospel of love. This development is worth watching.

"I have faith, of course, in your courtesy to publish this letter in your columns.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr. O. H. Pannkoke"

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### OUR REPLY

1) We readily trust and hope that in his heart of hearts our correspondent does not himself believe utterances which have emanated from him and which have been cited in the February issue of *The Confessional Lutheran*. But that is not for us to say. Only he himself can clear himself of the radical statements of which he has become guilty, particularly if as a writer in our midst he wishes to enjoy the confidence of others. It may be added that the present letter can hardly suffice to serve this purpose.

2) Our correspondent will have to dig deeper to get at "all the fundamental positions" of Marx. He will have to distil Marxism more thoroughly to get at its essence. The *articulus omnium fundamentalissimus* of Marxist ideology can hardly escape anyone who will judge it out of its own mouth. A few citations from its recognized sources will suffice.

Here is the Marxist view of history: "When the ancient world was in its last throes, the ancient world was overcome by Christianity. When Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas, feudal society fought its death-battle with the then revolutionary bourgeoisie . . . (The sense of a longer portion which we are here omitting is this that, since every dog has his day, the bourgeoisie, the free middle class, with all of its traditional ideas, inclusive of religion and morals, must now go, in turn; for—and so 'let us have done with the bourgeois objections to Communism') the Communist revolution . . . involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas." *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, pp. 29ff.

The basic concept of Marxism, then—contrary perhaps to general recognition of this fact—lies in the realm of religious things. "We must combat religion—this is the A B C of all materialism, and

consequently of Marxism." Lenin, **Religion**, p. 14. "As early as 1844 Marx coined the phrase: 'The criticism of religion is the beginning of all criticism.'" Lenin, **Religion**, p. 3. It is in keeping with this Marxist maxim that Yaroslavsky, President of the League of Militant Atheists enjoins: "In our work among religious people we must bear in mind Lenin's advice to utilize every method available to us, or, as he said, we must 'approach them this way and that way,' in order to stimulate them to criticize religion themselves." **Religion in the U. S. S. R.**, p. 61. Marxism, accordingly, is essentially a complete negative life principle, in the words of Lenin "advocating 'merciless criticism of everything in existence.'" **The Teaching of Karl Marx**, p. 7. That is why Marxists "everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things." **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, p. 44.

It would take many pages to show how Marxism reaches into every sphere of thought and into every domain of life, from religion, philosophy, and science, to literature, law and art, least of all forgetting such practical aspects of the human side of living as questions of marriage, morals, and family relations, matters of law, and political, social, and economic relations generally. The whole situation can, no doubt, be very well summed up in words such as these: "That we awake to the fact that an age of tradition has passed in every sphere of thought and life. The physical sciences, the social sciences, philosophy, religion, democracy, capitalism, individualism—all are finding that their fundamental assumptions are falling, that age-old policies are proving futile as life has become so much deeper and more many-sided since the upheaval of the World War." **Cp. Conf. Luth.**, Vol 1, No. 2, p. 8. No good Marxist will hesitate to subscribe to these words. No good Christian will readily consent to endorse them.

\* \* \* \*

It may be well to point out here that one must distinguish between Marxism and Marxianism, a distinction which is well recognized among followers of Marx themselves.

Marxists accept, or at least mean to accept, all of Marx's fundamental propositions. They are not agreed among themselves. They all believe in the "revolution" which Marx taught, with regard to every sphere of life. But Marxism revolves them so fast, that like men on a mad merry-go-round, they sometimes are not sure with reference to one another who is really revolving, and who isn't. Thus there are, to mention only these, the Stalinists and the Trotskyites (The Fourth International), the former of whom are organized as the Communist Party of the U. S. A. under the leadership of Earl Browder, while the latter go under the name of the Socialist Workers Party, in America. But there are also many others, each of whom claim that they alone are orthodox Marxists, while they regard all others as mere sectarians. As differentiated from Marxists, Marxians are those who accept either all or only some of Marx's fundamental principles, in a modified form; and in a wider sense, all who incline that way. All of what is popularly called Socialism today would eventually come under this head.

To illustrate how followers of Marx themselves observe this distinction, it may be noted that in one of the quotations adduced above, the word "Marxist" is advisedly used, just as we have used it throughout the above. On the other hand, Marxists will refer to **Science and Society**, a quarterly pub-

lished by a group of professors in American universities, as a "Marxian" organ, because perhaps none of its contributors wants to be thought of as accepting Marx's principles in their entirety.

\* \* \* \*

Criticism of the particular propositions of our correspondent could well be made, showing lack of a real grasp even of the positions of Marx which have been postulated by him. Thus, as to the first position stated, that of dialectical materialism, it is not correct to state that according to Marxism "this means that the material side of life brings forth . . . religious beliefs." Marxism, in fact, teaches quite the contrary, viz., that true scientific materialism never brought forth a single religious idea and never will; that men can be religious only so long as they are not dialectic materialists, such as everyone ought to be, and as it is Communism's historic mission to make of everyone; and that there can therefore simply be no place in its thinking for any religious systems whatsoever.

To show that our correspondent has not read closely enough in his studies in Marx, we shall quote the latter's foremost American exponent, Earl Browder, asking that the emphasis (which is ours) be noted: "It is the essence of our thought, and that is why we are called materialist, that (not God, who is only a morbid idea, but) the universe and life come first, and out of it grows the idea, not the other way about; and it is also of the essence of our thought, and that is why we are called dialectical, not mechanical materialists (it seems possible that our correspondent is confusing these two), that the idea, when it corresponds to reality and is taken possession of by the masses, becomes such a power as can shape, direct, and guide the human race to complete freedom, which is the same thing as to say the full realization of its capacities." **Religion and Communism**, pp. 8ff. The point is that according to Marxism "religion does not correspond to reality." This is just another way of saying that Communists simply don't believe in it. Dialectical materialism, which is the science of sciences to Marxists, can therefore not tolerate it for a single moment. To use another one of its expressions, religion "has no value." It is the kind of thing a man sees when he has a bandage before his eyes, or when he is drunk, or under the influence of some narcotic dope. (All of these are Communism's own comparisons.) Life can be explained and lived far better without it. It is not only a decided hindrance, but it is the fundamental hindrance, to all progress. Hence, away with it! And let's have scientific Socialism instead!

Limitations of space forbid further consideration of our correspondent's various propositions. It should once more be stated with emphasis, however, that the visible Church and its ministry, when true to their calling, determine their own necessary "material, social, and cultural environment, rather than that the latter should be unduly influenced by the former. That is why the Lord, in sending out His Apostles, told them: 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves.' He also indicated how deep the cause may lie, and what remedy is to be applied, if His ministry is not properly supported. Mt. 10, 1-15. A true preacher of the Gospel need hardly entertain any real fears as to going hungry, nor need he be bowed down by unnecessary care which will impair his ministrations. Mt. 6, 24ff. We can only repeat that our correspondent is evidently confusing cause and effect, as is done by all of those who are on the one hand insufficiently impressed by the eternal verities of

God's Holy Word, and who on the other hand are unduly impressed by mere social and material considerations.

The practical value of all of the above considerations lies in this that they can serve to show how souls which are not sufficiently oriented in God's eternal Word and which have, perhaps unconsciously, come under the spell of materialistic and socialistic influences, too readily play into the hands of the Church's worst foes. If there ever was a time when one could hardly be too sure of the direction in which he is going, that time is today. Particularly does this hold true for anyone who would lead others along life's way. Nor should anyone suppose that he can well go half way down the road of modern Socialism, without fearing that he may sooner or later find himself impelled to go also the other half. If anyone starting in this direction may not himself be inclined to go all the way, others may well see to it that the further necessary logical steps are eventually taken.

3) If statements such as those which we have adduced are not to be understood to mean what they seem to mean, then an explanation is owing the world. If those who speak and write for public consumption will not be articulate, others can hardly be blamed for articulating what has been said. For the human mind being what it is, it must according to the best of its ability register definite impressions.

We must confess that as for ourselves we have been able to discern only differences which are merely matters of degree rather than of kind, between the statements in question and those of Socialists in general.

It may be added that in coming to some of the conclusions to which we did find it necessary to come, so far as we are concerned, we took into account other statements that were made in the same connection with those which we have seen fit to condemn. To cite but one or two of these it has e. g. been said, in the same breath with what has already been quoted, "Basically we are suffering from the deadly disease of orthodoxy. We worship the abstract definition of our faith formulated by seventeenth century Aristotelian logic and refined in the controversies of the past generations. We have a deadly fear that faith might become free and a power in life today." We have to hear of "elements in our Church which are concerned to see our Church assume its rightful place of spiritual and social influence in the present situation." Indeed, we are assured—this was in 1936—that there has developed in Missouri a "group which is rapidly assuming leadership" which is something after our correspondent's own heart, and which to him represents "the most hopeful religious movement among Lutherans in the Middle West, if not America"—a movement which, it is claimed, is not confined to Missouri, but of which Dr. Reu, the A. L. C. leader, is especially asserted to be a part. (The National Lutheran Council News Bulletin of Sept. 18, 1936, from which all of this is taken, should be read in its entirety by everyone who is really concerned about this matter. If this publication is not available, the Wis. Syn. Theol. Quartal-Schrift, Jan., 1937, pp. 23ff. may well be consulted.

This will also be the place to say that if all such statements are not to be taken at their face value, then those who have associated themselves with our correspondent and have publicly given space

to his utterances should be expected roundly to disown them.

4) Far be it from us to question the personal faith of anyone who does not himself make an outright disavowal of it. That is a matter which must always necessarily be left to God, who alone can discern the heart of man, no matter how little or how far anyone may stray from revealed truth on his errant way. The Confessional Lutheran has in its initial statement of policy expressed itself with reference to this question in such a manner as to leave no room for doubt. It insists just as emphatically, on the other hand, that those who would set themselves up as teachers within the Church must be prepared to have their public utterances scrutinized under the revealing light of God's Holy Word, which can be our only guide. It is fully mindful of the rule of I Cor. 4, 2-5, according to which any subjective judgment with reference to mere personal considerations must always be regarded as quite valueless. It will never permit the objective rule of I Cor. 4, 10, 15 to be waived, according to which that which such men say must be judged in wisdom by those who hear them. Particularly when unionism and error are seeking domicile in our Church, and objective truth is at stake, we shall continue to denounce these in no uncertain terms; and we shall—let such denunciations fall where they will—permit no merely subjective considerations, such as the favor or fear of men, to stand in our way.

That has always been the way in the Church, whenever she was true to her real calling and mission. We are not ready to give up that way. For it would mean, eventually, to deliver up the Church itself.

## • Rom. 16, 17

It is well known that there are those who are no longer so sure as to whether Rom. 16, 17 is to be applied to a particular situation, unless the "belly-serving" judgment which God has in v. 18 pronounced over promoters of anti-Scriptural teaching can be specifically demonstrated. We do not share this view. We rather adhere to the simple Scriptural text, and the historical Christian and Lutheran view, regarding which any good old commentary, Stoeckhardt on Romans, or Pieper's Dogmatics, will give the necessary information. (Cp. also Theol. Quartal-schrift, Apr., 1940, pp. 91ff.) It may also be stated that here as elsewhere it will be found, sooner or later, that faulty exegesis has a strange way of getting into trouble with itself. However, the situation postulated by the contention of those whose view has been adduced should in any case hardly seem so difficult to demonstrate. By way of illustration and proof we cite a statement from Dr. Theo. Graebner's pamphlet, *The Historic Lutheran Position*. With reference to even the best of Synods and Churches, the author has there rightly said: "The fear of the loss of position is what will keep more liberal spirits in line." (P. 31.)

That simple statement, quoted from Dr. Graebner, ought to go a long way toward removing any possible lingering doubt.

## • Recommended Reading

*Unionism and Common, or Joint, Prayer in the Light of the Word of God.* By Prof. P. E. Kretzmann, 6 pp., mimeogr. Order from author. Enclose 10 cents.

**The Different Spirit**, 1938, 36pp.—**The Confession of the Missouri Synod and the Desired Unity of the Lutheran Church**, 1935, 54 pp.—**Missouri, Iowa, and Ohio: The Old and the New Differences**, 1928, 92 pp. 60 cents. All by Rev. J. Buenger. Order from author.

**The Historical Open Questions Among American Lutherans**. By Rev. Theo. Hanssen. 1935. 105 pp. Order from author.

## ° Defining Separatism And Sectarianism

When our Synod was to be organized, almost one hundred years ago, it formally stated as one of the first of the reasons for its taking this step, the "preservation and promotion of the unity of a pure confession (Eph. 4, 3-6; I Cor. 1, 10) and a common defense against separatistic and sectarian offense." (Art. I, Par. 2 The respective paragraph is now found under Art. III, Par. 1.)

But what is meant by separatistic and sectarian offense? There need be little questioning as to this. For our fathers themselves very concisely explained its true meaning in a footnote which was appended to the original draft of the tentative synodical constitution published in 1846. It reads as follows:

"Separatists (schismatics) or isolationists are such as do not indeed in the first place sever themselves from the doctrine, but only from the external fellowship of the Church, because also hypocrites are intermingled with it; just as though it were possible for the Church to sever such professing Christians from herself, especially when their hypocrisy does not reveal itself by manifest sins. The Church is then much rather to be guided by Mt. 13, 29ff., and by the Lord's procedure against Judas. For she is finally to exclude only manifest and obstinate sinners from herself, after all grades of admonition according to Mt. 18, 15-17, have proved fruitless.

"Sectarians on the other hand, or heterodox (heretics), are such as separate themselves from the pure doctrine and in one or another article originate, promulgate, or at least adhere to and stubbornly defend a teaching which is contrary to Scripture, in other words, false. These the Church is, after it has once and again admonished them in vain, to avoid and reject, Tit. 3, 10; Rom. 16, 17. Yes, according to Gal. 1, 8ff. she is to anathematize them, not of course absolutely, as to their persons, as though they could not again come to repentance, but as agents of soul-destroying erroneous teaching.—It frequently happens, by the way, that separatists eventually become sectarians." (Also found in **Lutheraner**, III, 1, p. 2.)

This truly Scriptural definition of separatism, and of sectarianism, or heresy, covering fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines alike, well answers questions which have been needlessly raised among us these days, and should seem to make any further uncertainty as to them quite unnecessary.

## ° Quaedam Levia Errata

The above Latin heading means "certain lesser mistakes." It occurs in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. The Apology was originally written in Latin by Melancthon, who also had a hand in the preparation of the German translation, which is the work of Justus Jonas. In interpreting the passage

Col. 3, 14, the Apology says "that there should be love in the Church in order that it may preserve concord, bear with the harsher manner of brethren as there is need, overlook less serious mistakes, lest the Church fly apart into various schisms, and enmities and factions arise from the schism." (**Conc. Trigl.**, p. 184.) In his pamphlet, **The Historic Lutheran Position**, Dr. Theo. Graebner calls attention to the fact that "the Latin is striking: Love has the function to ignore 'quaedam levia errata.'" (P. 15.) That is correct. The Latin is indeed striking in this instance. However, it does not seem to us that the author of the pamphlet named has succeeded in making clear in just what way the Latin is striking here. We do not know whether, if we attempt to do so, we shall succeed any better. But we shall try.

The point is that the Latin has two words, "error" and "erratum," which are rather alike in appearance, but quite different in meaning. The former, by far the stronger of the two, means just what it means in English: an error; an aberration, usually of a more serious nature; a departing from the right way. It is invariably used when it is desired to designate deviations from Christian doctrine. "Erratum," on the other hand, never stands for anything like that. It means simply a mistake, a slip. We are familiar with it from its use in connection with newly published books, where it denotes mistakes overlooked in printing. It has been rightly so translated in our English version of the Apology: "mistakes"—"less serious mistakes." The German, which is throughout a rather free but faithful rendering of the Latin original, says: "dass einer des andern Fehle, Gebrechen dulden und tragen soll."

Our Confession speaks advisedly in the manner in which this is done here. For the Confessions of Lutheranism do not wish to make the least concession to error. Nor will anyone, without doing violence to them, ever succeed in construing and establishing a toleration of doctrinal error on the strength of the passage which has been cited.

But as for mere errata—yes, they inculcate upon a Church already united in a concord of Christian doctrine, love to the uttermost, as the bond of perfectness that completes its being held together.

That is what the Biblical text itself does. Col. 3, 12-14.

## ° Coming Issues

Our May issue will treat Theses II-VI of Walther's Propositions on the False Open Question Theory. All other articles previously announced and not yet published will also be included in either the next or other future issues.

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(Additional copies of this issue of the **Confessional Lutheran** may be had at 10c per copy, or in quantities at the special rate of \$1.00 per twenty-five, postpaid, if ordered within fifteen days after date of publication, after which the printer's forms will be destroyed. Only subscribers and contributors are assured copies of every issue; these can, however, depend on a full year's subscription. All subscriptions and inquiries should be addressed to, Rev. A. E. Beck, Business Manager, Foley, Minnesota.)

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

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622  
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RECEIVED  
MAY 1940

# THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF, Editor  
Red Lake Falls, Minnesota

REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager  
Foley, Minnesota

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"The Confessional Lutheran" is a venture of faith. While the intention is to publish the periodical monthly, it will regularly go to press only so long as the necessary support warrants this. Subscription: One Dollar per Year. Larger amounts are welcome.

Vol. I

May, 1940

No. 5

IN THIS ISSUE: LUTHERAN UNION—A GENERAL CHARACTERIZATION OF MODERN COMMUNISM OR SOCIALISM—CONFERENCE REPORTS—FOR THE RECORD—ON THE "MUST" LIST—DARE A CHURCH DECLARE DOCTRINAL MATTERS NON-DIVISIVE?—THE SITUATION IN A NUTSHELL—"OPEN QUESTION" THEORY.

## ❶ LUTHERAN UNION

### Editorial Remark

In its January and February issues, *The American Lutheran* presented two feature articles, written by Dr. Graebner, in the interest of this journal's avowed union policy. These articles found a great deal of fault with the Wisconsin and Norwegian synods, because they could for conscientious reasons not endorse the St. Louis Articles of Agreement of 1938 as an acceptable basis for a God-pleasing union with the A. L. C. "These synods, and by implication those within the Missouri Synod who share their convictions, were branded as fanatical sectarians." Rev. Geo. O. Lillegard, a member of the Norwegian Synod, has now shown Dr. Graebner's charges to be utterly unfounded. He has, in fact, shown, that due to an unfortunate misunderstanding of underlying principles and resultant untenable premises, Dr. Graebner has arrived at conclusions which have caused him to take a position which is in some instances the exact reverse of that of the Scripturally correct and historically Lutheran position of the Missourian fathers. *The American Lutheran* has, however, now refused to give space to the reply of Pastor Lillegard, except as rewritten by its editorial staff. It has demanded that extensive and important portions of his article be omitted, because of a policy of avoiding "personalities and unwarranted insinuations." Pastor Lillegard complains, that as in the case of the Norwegian merger days twenty-five years ago, so the official and unofficial press within the Missouri Synod has been closed to any fair presentation of the case against the proposed union with the A. L. C. today. He has therefore asked that his article be given space in the pages of *The Confessional Lutheran*. We feel that this request cannot be well denied, and therefore submit his article herewith. The portions which *The American Lutheran* proposed to omit are printed in capitals. This

has been done so that it might be left for the reader to judge whether *The American Lutheran's* contentions are justified by facts. It may be safely said, however, that obviously some of the portions it intended to omit could by no stretch of the imagination come under the condemnation which this "open forum" journal undertook to pronounce.

In contrast to the unvarying union policy of *The American Lutheran*, a statement must be made in fairness to Dr. Graebner. In his "Plea for Sanity and Charity" he had said that it was because "something must be said in public in view of the reflections" which he felt must be occasioned by the official declarations of disapproval on the part of the Wisconsin Synod and the Norwegian Synod "upon everyone who ascribes to the agreement of 1938 (as he certainly did), and refuses to acknowledge that later developments have proven this agreement a mistake\* (as he certainly didn't)," that he availed himself of the opportunity to speak through the pages of *The American Lutheran*. Dr. Graebner no longer holds the view which he thus held so recently. For in a letter received by the editor of *The Confessional Lutheran* these days he states that "he, for one, is not for endorsement in 1941 of the union documents in their present form." We are also given the hope that we may soon look for some statement in the *Lutheran Witness* regarding this matter.

Pastor Lillegard's article follows.

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### "In Non-Essentials, Liberty"

When the Synodical Conference was being organized, those responsible for this new organization of Lutherans had to explain why they were not willing to join such already existing organizations as the General Council. Dr. W. Sihler prepared a paper for the representatives who met in 1871 to arrange for the new church-federation, in which he gave the reasons in detail. Among those most strongly stressed was the affiliation of the Iowa Synod with the General Council. The Iowa Synod's position on various doctrines, particularly in the field of "the Last Things," was denounced as un-Lutheran; and it was made clear that no fellowship could be had

\*This was written after the Sandusky Resolutions.

\*In the April issue of *The Confessional Lutheran*, in the article "Either a True Concord or None at All," it has been clearly and conclusively shown that Dr. Graebner's conception of fanaticism, as developed in his pamphlet, *The Historic Lutheran Position, in Non-Fundamentals*, p. 21ff, is based on a complete misunderstanding e. g. of Dr. Walther's position.

with Churches which taught, or tolerated, such doctrines. (CF. A REVIEW OF THIS PAPER IN "EBENEZER," PP. 321-326.)

It is not strange, then, that the very existence of the Synodical Conference should be threatened by the Missouri Synod's action in adopting the A. L. C. "Declaration" as part of "the doctrinal basis for future church fellowship."\* For this "Declaration" reserves for the A. L. C. just such liberty on various points of doctrine as the Synodical Conference in 1872 condemned and made a ground for organizing a separate church-body—which was, of course, dubbed "separatistic" by other Lutherans. WHEN THIS FACT IS POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, DR. GRAEBNER AND OTHERS WITH HIM JOIN THE CHORUS DEMANDING MORE CHARITY AND LIBERTY IN DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS, INSTEAD OF SEEKING TO CORRECT THE PALPABLE MISTAKES OF THE ST. LOUIS CONVENTION.

In this connection,\* DR. GRAEBNER IN HIS ARTICLES IN "THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN" (HEREAFTER REFERRED TO AS "G. A. L.") MAKES SOME DANGEROUS CLAIMS. HE SAYS, FOR EXAMPLE: "If this ('speaking the same thing,' I Cor. 1, 10) is urged (as a condition of fellowship) regarding any expression of human origin, no matter how orthodox, it is the essence of sectarianism."—Accordingly, Athanasius and his followers were "sectarians" when they insisted on "homoioussios," in stating the doctrine of Christ's deity, and rejected "homoioussios," although both terms were of definitely "human origin." Likewise "the fathers" of the Missouri Synod were "sectarian" when they insisted on that form of the doctrine of election to be found in the Formula of Concord and rejected the "second form" of the later dogmaticians, though both were of "human origin." The fact is, of course, that true fellowship exists only where Christians do "speak the same thing," so that they will all teach the same Scriptural doctrines and reject all un-Scriptural teachings as mischievous errors. Only in those questions which Scripture itself has left open dare there be any public disagreement which is allowed to remain unsettled indefinitely.

The issue is not whether a church-body may permit differences of opinion on matters not revealed in Scripture; FOR THERE THE CHURCH DARE NOT MAKE LAWS AT ALL, LEST IT FALL UNDER THE CURSE OF REV. 22, 18. Nor is the issue whether a Church may permit varying terminology so long as the essential teaching remains the same; nor whether it may regard as brethren those who err in "non-fundamentals," under certain conditions.\* All this has been granted by orthodox Lutherans from the beginning. The issue is whether

\*WHEN THE EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN COMMENTS, IN THE MARCH ISSUE, P. 6, ON OUR STATEMENT: "THE PROCEEDINGS AT CLEVELAND LENT COLOR TO THE CHARGE THAT CERTAIN PROMINENT MEN IN THE MISSOURI SYNOD WERE OUT TO 'BREAK UP THE SYNODICAL CONFERENCE,'" HE DISREGARDS THE FACT THAT WE EXPRESSED NO OPINION AS TO THE TRUTH OF THE CHARGE, BUT EMPHASIZED ONLY THAT THE PROCEEDINGS AT CLEVELAND LENT COLOR TO THAT CHARGE. IF HE WISHES TO DENY THAT, WE SHALL BE GLAD TO OFFER A REVIEW OF THOSE PROCEEDINGS TO SUBSTANTIATE OUR STATEMENT AS IT STANDS.

\*For the following words, which it wanted omitted, The American Lutheran substituted simply: "It is claimed." —Editor.

\*THESE CONDITIONS ARE STATED AS FOLLOWS IN THE ARTICLE IN LEHRE UND WEHRE, VOL. 19, P. 290, REFERRED TO IN THE ST. LOUIS RE-

such doctrines as those referred to in the A. L. C. "Declaration" are of sufficient importance to require real unity, or may rather be classed with the "non-essentials" in which there should be "liberty;" AND WHETHER THOSE WHO DEPART FROM THE CLEAR SCRIPTURE TEACHINGS IN THESE POINTS CAN BE RECOGNIZED AS BRETHREN UNDER THE EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES.

THIS QUESTION DR. GRAEBNER DISMISSES WITH A REFERENCE TO HIS OWN TREATISE ON THE HISTORIC LUTHERAN POSITION IN NON-FUNDAMENTALS. IT DESERVES, HOWEVER, MORE CAREFUL TREATMENT THAN DR. GRAEBNER HAS GIVEN IT, EITHER IN THIS MONOGRAPH OR IN HIS ARTICLES IN THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN. For it is one thing to say, with Dr. Walther: "In this life absolute unity in faith and doctrine is not possible, and no higher unity than a fundamental one can be attained." (Conc. Theol. Monthly, April, 1939, p. 262.)\* But it is an entirely different thing to say with reference to certain specified doctrines: "We are firmly convinced that it is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines" (A. L. C. Sandusky Resolutions); or: "Church-fellowship is justifiable and can be practiced even if no agreement is reached on these points" (A. L. C. Committee, C. T. M., Dec., 1939, p. 932); thus in reality establishing it as an unconditioned principle, on which a new church union is to be based, that "non-fundamental doctrines" are a "no man's land" where Scripture no longer speaks with authority. Dr. Walther's statement merely records an historical fact, of which the Synodical Conference itself affords a good example. The A. L. C. statements involve a denial of the clearness and sufficiency of Scripture on important points of doctrine. Dr. Walther's condemnation of such an attitude to Scripture was severe. (See his essay on "Open Questions" in the 1939 Conc. Theol. Monthly, especially the last installment, in the Nov. issue.) His position was em-

SOLUTIONS ON UNION: "... A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IN NON-FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES... DOES NOT PREVENT TRUE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP, IF ONLY THEY DO NOT WITTINGLY SIN AGAINST THE WORD OF GOD OR CAUSE DISSENSIONS IN THE CHURCH." THIS IS LATER ON AMPLIFIED IN THE SAME ARTICLE (P. 295): "A DISTINCTION MUST BE MADE BETWEEN 1) BRETHREN WHO ERR FROM WEAKNESS OR PREJUDICE AND WHO SEEK TO BECOME CLEAR ON THE DOCTRINES AT ISSUE... TO SUCH WE FROM THE HEART OFFER ALL PATIENCE, LOVE, AND FELLOWSHIP... AND 2) THOSE WHO PERSISTENTLY DECLARE THAT THE EXISTING DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES ARE MATTERS OF INDIFFERENCE AND WITHDRAW FROM A CHRISTIAN SETTLEMENT OF THEM, OR STUBBORNLY OPPOSE THE TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH THAT HAS BEEN CLEARLY AND REPEATEDLY GIVEN, ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE EMBITTERED AGAINST IT, AND IN AN OFFENSIVE MANNER BELITTLE THOSE WHO STAND UP FOR THE TRUTH; SUCH PEOPLE THEMSELVES SEVER, AND RENDER IMPOSSIBLE, FELLOWSHIP WITH US.

WHEN PASTOR H. O. KOEHLER OF THE IOWA SYNOD QUOTED THE ARTICLE REFERRED TO ABOVE IN THE SAME MISLEADING MANNER AS THE ST. LOUIS RESOLUTIONS NOW DO, PROF. GÜNTHER ANSWERED HIM IN AN ARTICLE IN LEHRE UND WEHRE, VOL. 25, PP. 35 FF. CALLING ATTENTION TO THE "EXCEPTIONS" AND "CONDITIONS" GIVEN ABOVE.

\*By this Walther means to say that in the blessed hereafter our knowledge, and hence our agreement, will be in itself perfect. The most, and the least, that we can do in this life is to agree a priori to accept all of the Scriptures as the "fundament" or foundation of our faith and life without any reservations. Thus agreed, we have fundamental unity in accordance with which all arising differences will be adjusted.—Editor.

phatically this that a Church cannot be "regarded as a true Church and be treated as such if it either makes such non-fundamental errors a part of its confession,—or in a unionistic fashion and in a spirit of indifference insists that a deviation from God's clear Word in such points need be of no concern to us." (C. T. M., Apr., 1939, p. 262.)

In its "Brief Statement" the Missouri Synod declared: "Not to be included in the number of open questions are the following: the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry, on Sunday, of Chiliasm, and of Antichrist, these doctrines being clearly defined in Scripture." But the A. L. C. "Declaration" makes it evident that the A. L. C. does not accept the clearly defined Scriptural teachings on these points; it asks instead that certain other views be at least tolerated. IN EARLIER YEARS, THE MISSOURI SYNOD REFUSED THIS TOLERATION. TODAY IT NOT ONLY CONCEDES IT, BUT ATTACKS THE BRETHREN WHO WANT TO "WALK IN THE OLD PATHS" AS "SEPARATISTS WHO ARE LACKING IN CHARITY AND SANITY,"—THAT IS, IF DR. GRAEBNER IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS REPRESENTING THE MISSOURI SYNOD AND NOT MERELY A SEPARATISTIC GROUP WITHIN THE MISSOURI SYNOD. IN SHORT, "THE FATHERS" AND DR. GRAEBNER NO LONGER "SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE," THE HAND IS THE HAND OF MISSOURI, BUT THE VOICE IS THE VOICE OF IOWA.

The MISSOURI SYNOD, IN ITS St. Louis Resolutions, AND DR. GRAEBNER, IN HIS WRITING ON THE SUBJECT, do indeed quote "the fathers" in defence of their newly acquired toleration. But they do not observe the manner in which these orthodox Lutherans safeguarded their admissions against possible misuse, nor do they emphasize those considerations which finally determined the earlier attitude of the church over against errorists. To discuss all the doctrines at issue here would require more space than can reasonably be expected in such a journal as *The American Lutheran*. We can, however, give a few examples of the differences between the old leaders of the Missouri Synod and some of its present-day leaders.

In Dr. Walther's day, Loche in Germany attacked the Missouri Synod as a disturbing element in American Lutheranism, because it refused to recognize the Buffalo and Iowa Synods, although, as he wrote, "these three synods are all entirely orthodox and united in all doctrines of Lutheranism, except for divergent views on the Church and the Ministry and on the Last Things. The separatism (of the Missouri Synod) caused it... to exclude several of its oldest and most faithful pastors, with a part of their congregations, on account of a differing conception of the doctrine of the Last Things, in spite of the very innocent form in which this doctrine was presented; and caused it to continue to deny church and communion fellowship to the members of the other synods—something which, on the other hand, is not the case with the Iowa Synod." (Loche, quoted in *Quellen und Dokumente*, p. 209, tr. from the German by L.)

In our day,\* DR. GRAEBNER ATTACKS THE WISCONSIN AND NORWEGIAN SYNODS AND ACCUSES THEM OF SEPARATISM FOR refusing to accept as a basis for union with the A. L. C. (to which the old Iowa and Buffalo Synods belong) a

of Chiliasm, as well as the views of the Church and series of documents which include the fundamental thesis of Loche and his followers: that certain forms the Ministry taught by them, are not to be condemned as errors of a church-divisive character. **THUS DO THE TIMES CHANGE AND MERE MEN WITH THEM!**

At the "Madison Conference" in 1858, the Iowa Synod came with the following points: "1) The Antichrist is not the Papacy, but a person. 2) The Kingdom of the Antichrist comes just before the return of Christ. 3) At the time of the second coming of Christ (to destroy the Antichrist) the conversion of 'all Israel' will at least have begun. Israel will also return to the land of its fathers. 4) At the end of the 3½ years, Christ will appear to destroy the Antichrist and to establish the 1000 year kingdom. 5) At the beginning of the 1000 year kingdom, the first resurrection will take place, which is a physical resurrection. 6) We reject with the Augustana (the teaching) that before the resurrection of the dead the saints will have an earthly kingdom and destroy all the godless. 7) We do not believe that there will be no more sin in the 1000 Year Kingdom. But where there is sin, the results of sin will not be lacking cross and suffering. We accordingly do not overthrow the thesis that the Church will be a kingdom of the cross to the end of days. 8) Between the end of the 1000 year kingdom and the Last Day, the day of the general resurrection of the dead, there will come a period in which Satan, when he is again loosed, will seduce the peoples to a great apostasy. This will be the time of Gog and Magog. 9) Then will come the end of this present age, the general resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the world, its destruction by fire and the 'regeneration' of heaven and earth." (*Quellen und Dokumente*, p. 156; tr. from the German by L.)

Although these doctrines have been refined and modified in later years, it is an undeniable fact that the Iowa Synod, and later the A. L. C., have tolerated this same Chiliastic "system of doctrine." It is this "system" for which the A. L. C. "Declaration" also makes room—Antichrist, Conversion of the Jews, Resurrection of the martyrs, a future 1000 year reign of Christ, and all: Dr. Walther, Dr. Sihler, and "the fathers" in general, condemned that "system of doctrine" out of hand. DR. GRAEBNER NOW CONDONES IT. The Missouri Synod, in its "Brief Statement," rejects it. By adopting the A. L. C. "Declaration" as a part of the doctrinal basis for church-fellowship, it again admits it into the Church. **THE A. L. C., IN ALL HONESTY,\* QUALI-**

\*THE EXTRAORDINARY USE WHICH HAS BEEN MADE OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT BY "G. A. L." AND THE EDITORS OF THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN IS WELL ILLUSTRATED BY THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS ON A SIMILAR STATEMENT IN OUR FIRST ARTICLE. (SEE MARCH ISSUE, P. 6, PAR. 7) WHEN WE SEEK TO UNDERSTAND THE A. L. C. STATEMENTS IN THE WAY IN WHICH THE A. L. C. MEMBERS MUST BE CONCEIVED AS MEANING THEM, IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR WHOLE PAST HISTORY, WE ARE ACCUSED OF "MOVING THE DISCUSSION INTO AN ATMOSPHERE OF SUSPICION AND DISTRUST," "DOUBTING THE OPPONENT'S HONESTY," ETC. THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT REQUIRES, INDEED, THAT WE BE NOT "DOUBLE-MINDED," BUT IT DOES NOT REQUIRE THAT WE BE SIMPLE-MINDED. OR DO NOT THE EDITORS OF THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN KNOW THAT THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH AND ITS CONSTITUENT SYNODS HAVE CONTINUALLY ACCUSED THE MISSOURI SYNOD OF ERROR—ACCUSATIONS WHICH HAVE NOT YET BEEN SPECIFICALLY RETRACTED?

\*The American Lutheran would here simply say: Some of us are accused of separatism.—Editor.



FIED ITS ACCEPTANCE OF THE "BRIEF STATEMENT" BY ITS "DECLARATION", AND IT IS NOT FAIR TO THEM TO INSIST THAT THEY ARE TO BE HELD STRICTLY TO THE WORDING OF THE "BRIEF STATEMENT," AS "G. A. L." AND OTHERS DO. THE A. L. C. HAS NOT INVOLVED ITSELF IN ANY INCONSISTENCY ACCORDINGLY, BUT THE MISSOURI SYNOD HAS TIED ITSELF UP IN A CONTRADICTION FROM WHICH THE ONLY ESCAPE IS TO RETRACE ITS STEPS, BACK TO THE SOUND POSITION OF "OLD MISSOURI." IT IS NO ANSWER TO SAY THAT THE MISSOURI SYNOD RESOLUTIONS MODIFY THE "DECLARATION" AND FIX THE SENSE IN WHICH IT IS TO BE UNDERSTOOD. FOR THE A. L. C. DID NOT ACCEPT THESE "RESOLUTIONS" AS A PART OF ITS BASIS FOR UNION. NOR DO THE REFERENCES IN THESE "RESOLUTIONS" TO THE WRITINGS OF THE "FATHERS" SHOW THAT THEY WOULD APPROVE THE A. L. C. "DECLARATION."

Thus the article in *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 18, p. 74ff. quoted in support of the statement that "the assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs before Judgment Day... need not be divisive of church-fellowship," actually points out that Selnecker was an opponent of all Chiliasm and that his "peculiar views" regarding the resurrection of some saints before the Last Day were "toto coelo" different from the Chiliasm doctrine of the martyrs before the millenium. It says: "The teaching that a physical resurrection (of some believers or martyrs) precedes the so-called 1000 year kingdom has always been looked upon in our Church as the distinguishing mark of a gross and damnable Chiliasm."\*. . . Similar strictures must be made as to the other quotations from "the fathers" with reference to the Antichrist, Conversion of the Jews, the "visible side of the invisible Church," etc. How they could be quoted as they have been must, accordingly, remain to us a mystery.

"G. A. L." ALSO DERIDES THOSE WHO\* find a terrible heresy, "the age-old false doctrine of justification post fidem" in the expression: "for all who believe," ("justify those who have come to faith"). At the first convention of the Synodical Conference, Dr. Walther read an essay on "Justification," in which he demonstrated the un-Scriptural and dangerous, faith-destroying character of just such expressions and condemned those who used them as errorists. BUT TODAY DR. GRAEBNER MAINTAINS "THAT OUR CHURCH MUST DISAVOW SUCH FANATICISM IF IT IS NOT TO BE REGARDED AS A SECT BY SOBER-MINDED LUTHERAN CHRISTIANS."\*\*—THE MISSOURI

\*In the essay under discussion Walther merely wants to rescue Selnecker from the false claim of Chiliasm 1) that he is one of them; 2) that he at least has this in common with them that he subverts the rule of a general resurrection. Elsewhere he rightly condemns the strange notion of Selnecker as an error—Cp. L. u. W. XIV, p. 231, footnote—which in the light of historical circumstances can be viewed as one of the many naevi of the fathers, with reference to him, though the teaching of it can for that reason by no means be tolerated by us. Cp. L. u. W., XIV, pp. 233 ff.—Editor.

\*The American Lutheran would substitute here: Some of us find. . . Editor.

\*\*SUCH ARE THE EXPRESSIONS WHICH THE EDITORS OF THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN FIND VERY "OBJECTIVE," CHARACTERIZED BY "JUDICIAL RESTRAINT," AND, IN GENERAL, "SANE AND CHARITABLE"; WHILE OUR ATTEMPTS AT DESCRIBING THEM ADEQUATELY, ARE CONDEMN-

ED AS "EMOTIONAL," ETC. IT IS NOTHING NEW, OF COURSE, IN THE HISTORY OF THE "RABIES THEOLOGORUM" THAT EACH SIDE SHOULD THINK ITS OWN LANGUAGE EMINENTLY SANE, WHILE THAT OF THE OPPONENTS WAS SIMPLY TERRIBLE. IN VIEW OF SUCH CHAPTERS IN THE BIBLE AS MT. 23, IT IS RATHER OBVIOUS THAT A JUST JUDGMENT WOULD CONSIDER FIRST OF ALL WHICH PARTY WAS ON THE LORD'S SIDE AND WHICH ON THE SIDE OF HIS ENEMIES. UNTIL AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON THAT SCORE, IT IS VAIN TO EXPECT AGREEMENT AS TO THE "OBJECTIVITY" AND "JUDICIAL RESTRAINT" OF THE CONTENDING PARTIES.

SYNOD, IT SEEMS, HAS TRAVELED QUITE FAR IN A HUNDRED YEARS, HAVING THUS (IF DR. GRAEBNER'S STATEMENT IS TO STAND) COVERED THE INFINITE DISTANCE FROM "NO" TO "YES," FROM CONDEMNATION OF AN EXPRESSION TO APPROVAL OF IT. THAT HE SHOULD CONDEMN THE LOWLY BRETHREN WHO NOW OBJECT TO THE A. L. C. "DECLARATION" MAY PLEASE SOME PEOPLE. BUT THAT HE THEREBY ALSO CONDEMNS THE FOUNDERS OF OUR CHURCH AND, IN EFFECT, CHARGES THEM WITH HAVING WASTED THEIR TIME IN TILTING AT WINDMILLS—THIS SHOULD NOT PLEASE EVEN THE BITTEREST "ANTI-MISSOURIAN." "G. A. L." ASSERTS, INDEED,\* that the A. L. C. "has taught correctly on this point long before there was any union committee." Nobody denies that many in the A. L. C. teach correctly on this and all other controverted points. The real issue, WHICH "G. A. L." IGNORES OR BLURS, is that the A. L. C. also has tolerated false teachings on them all, and still demands the right to tolerate them. (Consider in this connection Prof. J. P. Meyer's criticism of Dr. Lenski's Commentary on Romans, in *Theol. Quartal-schrift*, Jan., 1940, pp. 107-122.)

Dr. Walther and orthodox Lutherans in general always distinguished between bearing with an erring brother for an indefinite length of time, depending on the circumstances, and tolerating his error. "The error itself must never be tolerated by the Church even if it appears insignificant and not dangerous, provided it opposes a clear Word of God." (Dr. Walther, C. T. M., April, 1939, p. 260.) The mistake against which we are now trying to warn our Missouri brethren is just this of giving official sanction, if not directly to the error itself, then to the principle that the errors at issue are not important enough to be considered church-divisive. The A. L. C. has, by its "Declaration," saved the essential position of the Iowa Synod on the "Open Questions." THE MISSOURI SYNOD HAS, BY ACCEPTING THAT "DECLARATION," ABANDONED ITS HISTORIC POSITION. THIS, WE HAVE NO DOUBT, WILL BE THE VERDICT OF HISTORY, MUCH THOUGH SOME "MISSOURIANS" MAY RESENT THE STATEMENT.

It will not help matters either to say, WITH "G. A. L.," that the "Open Questions" subject is one which, "though it occurs as an accusation many times since, has not been a controversy since 1868 or thereabouts." The devil is not to be exorcised by the mere denial of his existence. The fact is that this whole matter of "Open Questions," of the clearness and sufficiency of Scripture teaching, is a very live issue today, one which is at the root of our difficulties, not only in this union question, but also in several other controversies that could be named.

ED AS "EMOTIONAL," ETC. IT IS NOTHING NEW, OF COURSE, IN THE HISTORY OF THE "RABIES THEOLOGORUM" THAT EACH SIDE SHOULD THINK ITS OWN LANGUAGE EMINENTLY SANE, WHILE THAT OF THE OPPONENTS WAS SIMPLY TERRIBLE. IN VIEW OF SUCH CHAPTERS IN THE BIBLE AS MT. 23, IT IS RATHER OBVIOUS THAT A JUST JUDGMENT WOULD CONSIDER FIRST OF ALL WHICH PARTY WAS ON THE LORD'S SIDE AND WHICH ON THE SIDE OF HIS ENEMIES. UNTIL AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON THAT SCORE, IT IS VAIN TO EXPECT AGREEMENT AS TO THE "OBJECTIVITY" AND "JUDICIAL RESTRAINT" OF THE CONTENDING PARTIES.

\*The American Lutheran would substitute: It is claimed—Editor.

Those who would shut their eyes to it are only burying their heads, ostrich-like in the sand.\*

IN CLOSING LET US REMARK ON ONE MORE CHARACTERISTIC OF DR. GRAEBNER'S ARTICLES IN **THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN**: THE OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THIS COUNTRY WHICH THEY EXPRESS. TOO MANY PEOPLE READ PAST HISTORY, INDEED, THROUGH THE EYES OF LUTHER, WALTHER, BENTE, ET. AL., BUT READ CURRENT HISTORY THROUGH ROSE-COLORED GLASSES SUCH AS "THE FATHERS" DESPISED. IT WAS THE FALSE PROPHETS WHO CRIED "PEACE, PEACE," WHEN THERE WAS NO PEACE. THE TRUE PROPHETS HAD LITTLE GOOD TO SAY OF THE RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE IN ANY AGE. THE VERY FACT THAT THERE IS SO MUCH PROPAGANDA FOR "THEOLOGICAL PACIFISM," SO MUCH RESENTMENT TOWARD THEOLOGICAL POLEMICS, IS A SIGN OF THE TIMES WHICH BODES ILL FOR CONFESSIONAL LUTHERANISM. We for our part simply cannot understand those who find any progress toward a stricter confessionalism in the American Lutheran churches. The evidence is all to the contrary, not excepting the Synodical Conference. Prof. Theo. Hoyer's Synodical Conference essay (1938) was quoted: "Divisions and dissensions in the Lutheran Church were far greater and more serious in the period after Luther's death; yet there came union in the Formula of Concord"—which illustrates how historians may have their facts straight, yet interpret them wrongly. For it was the theological controversies of the 16th century that made it the "golden age" of Lutheran orthodoxy; WHILE, WHEN PEACE CAME, THE CHURCH SOON DEGENERATED, WITH THE PLAIN TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF CONCORD SET ASIDE BY SOME OF THE MOST BRILLIANT OF LUTHERAN DOGMATICIANS, AND THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE RAVAGED BY PIETISM AND RATIONALISM. THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS A "CHURCH MILITANT," AND THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE IT SHEATHE ITS SWORD, THE INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD, IN THE FACE OF ERROR, BE IT EVER SO INSIGNIFICANT AND HARMLESS IN APPEARANCE, ARE NOT BUILDING THE CHURCH OR EXTENDING ITS INFLUENCE OVER AN EVIL WORLD, BUT UNDERMINING IT, LIKE TERMITES EATING OUT THE PILLARS ON WHICH IT RESTS.\*

Cambridge, Mass.,  
March 12, 1940

Rev. Geo. O. Lillegard

\*Dr. P. E. Kretzmann has discussed this question in a mimeographed paper, to be had at his address, which presents the real position of the Scriptures and "the fathers." (In ordering enclose 15cts.—Editor.) **The Confessional Lutheran**, edited by Rev. P. Burgdorf, is likewise discussing this subject. Dr. Graebner's essay is too incorrect, in many of its key statements, to pass unchallenged.

\*WE HAVE OUTLINED OUR POSITION ON THE POINTS AT ISSUE. FOR DETAILED PROOFS, WE CAN ONLY REFER THE READER TO THE WRITINGS THAT HAVE BEEN QUOTED OR MENTIONED. IF OPPORTUNITY IS GIVEN IN THE FUTURE TO DISCUSS THE INDIVIDUAL DOCTRINES IN MORE DETAIL, QUOTATIONS CAN BE ADDUCED AT LENGTH. IT WOULD BE A BLESSING TO OUR CHURCH IF THIS PRESENT "UNION CONTROVERSY" WOULD LEAD MANY OF THE PASTORS AND LAY-PEOPLE TO STUDY THE WRITINGS OF MEN LIKE DR. WALTHER AND DR. SHULER, WHO KNEW NO REST FROM THEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSY.

## ◎ A General Characterization Of Modern Communism Or Socialism

### Its Philosophical Roots

A century or so ago, modern atheism came prominently on the academic scene in the form of materialism, crystalizing eventually in evolutionism, with Darwin as its outstanding exponent, who gained for it popular and almost universal recognition. This atheistic philosophy has since been used as an unvarying approach in every field of human inquiry and learning by modern materialistic science. At the same time it has, in the form of rationalistic higher criticism, been carried into the world's theological schools. But it has in these circles always remained a merely theoretical matter with little interest in its practical application, which has been left to the individual.

Karl Marx, the father of modern Communism and Socialism, has gone a step further. Leaning on Hegel, whose dialectical method he "cleansed. . . of idealism, and began to apply it in a material fashion,"\* and later influenced perhaps even more strongly by Feuerbach's "epoch-making" materialism,\* Marx sought to apply atheistic materialism to life practically in the sphere of political, social, and economic conditions. As stated by his life-long co-worker, Fr. Engels, the fundamental proposition of Karl Marx (economic determinism), embodied in the **Manifesto of the Communist Party** as its nucleus, "is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory has done for biology." **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, p. 6.\* Lenin, the great Russian Revolutionist

\*\*\*My own dialectical method is not only fundamentally different from the Hegelian dialectical method, but is its direct opposite. For Hegel, the thought process (which he actually transforms into an independent subject, giving to it the name of 'idea') is the demiurge (creator) of the real; and for him the real is only the outward manifestation of the idea. In my view, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing other than the material when it has been transposed and transplanted inside the human head."—Karl Marx, Preface to Second Edition of *Capital*, Paul Translation (Everyman's Library, No. 819), p. 873.

\*\*\*The great basic question of all, and especially of recent, philosophy, is, the question of the relationship between thought and existence, between spirit and nature. . . . Which is prior to the other: spirit or nature? Philosophers are divided into two great camps, according to the way in which they have answered this question. Those who declare that spirit existed before nature, and who, in the last analysis, therefore, assume in one way or another that the world was created. . . . have formed the idealist camp. The others, who regard nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism." Ludwig Feuerbach, by Fr. Engels, Berlin, 1927, p. 27ff.

"Any other use (in the philosophic sense) of the terms idealism and materialism is only confusing. Marx decidedly rejected not only idealism, always connected in one way or another with religion, but also the views of Hume and Kant, that are especially widespread in our day, as well as agnosticism, criticism, positivism in various forms; he considered such philosophy as a 'reactionary' concession to idealism, at best as a 'shamefaced manner of admitting materialism through the back door while denying it before the world.'" Lenin, **The Teachings of Karl Marx**, p. 11f.

\*That proposition is: "That in every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles form

and practical exponent of Marxism, has said: "Wherever materialism in science fails to develop into historical materialism—that is, into Marxism—it ends up in idealism and superstition." **Religion**, p. 6.

To speak in the words of the Psalmist, the academic atheist is content merely to commit the folly of saying "There is no God." (Ps. 14, 1.) Communists and all true Socialists, going a step further, "set themselves, and their rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying: Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us!" (Ps. 2, 1ff.) Modern Socialism puts a big red "R" into the evolution of the academic atheist, and makes flaming revolution of it. Without dwelling further on details, we shall simply summarize by saying that, together with Fr. Engels, who through most of his life was associated with him, Marx "worked out the theory and tactics of revolutionary proletarian Socialism, otherwise known as Communism (Marxism)," Lenin. **The Teachings of Karl Marx**, p. 7.

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### A Religion Of The Godless

We have had occasion to state that, contrary perhaps to general recognition of this fact, the basic concept of modern Communism and Socialism lies in the realm of religious things. The maxim formulated by Lenin has been cited: "We must combat religion—this is the A B C of all materialism, and consequently of Marxism," **Religion**, p. 14.

"There is no God, and Marx is his prophet." That is the manner in which Ferd. Ossendowski has aptly epitomized the fundamental concept of Communism, which he correctly characterizes as "a new religion as militant as Mohammedanism." **Lenin: God of the Godless**. Tr. from the Polish by Gregory Donald. Dutton & Co., N. Y., 1931.

This apt characterization can be extended by saying: Marx and Engels are Communism's chief prophets, Lenin is its Messiah,\* and Stalin its foremost apostle. The collective works of these four horsemen of this new apocalypse, who are extolled over and over again as "the greatest teachers of mankind"\*\*\* are the Bible of Communism, whose words are its A and O. The Communist Manifesto is its Creed.\*\*\* The three articles of the creed are; class consciousness, subversive agitation, and world revolution. Moscow is its holy city. The Kremlin

a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class—the bourgeoisie—without at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles." **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, p. 6. Religion, viewed in this respect, is considered by Communism to be the worst of all instruments of oppression and an instigator of class distinctions. Hence it must be the first thing to go.

\*Lenin's defiled remains lie entombed in the Red Square, outside the Kremlin. Nearby are the graves of Communism's "martyrs," several American revolutionaries among them.

\*\*So, for instance, in the high-sounding Preamble of the Constitution of the Communist Party of the U. S. A.

\*\*\*It is noteworthy that the designation "Symbol of Faith" was first given to the elaboration of the basic principles of the program of the Communist League as drafted by its local organizations before its First and Second Congress, after which its Manifesto was formulated and accepted. Cp. **History of the Communist Manifesto**, by V. Adoratsky, Director of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, p. 21.

is its temple,\*\*\* with the Red Square as its outer court, and Lenin's Tomb as its most sacred shrine.\* Bolshevism is its gospel.\*\*\*\* All real Marxist-Leninists are its true disciples. The Soviet is its heaven-on-earth, the proletariat its chosen people, while the wide world constitutes the broad field of its "historic mission" endeavor.

That Communism really aims to go as far as has been indicated in its program of eradicating religion can be seen from the words of Yaroslavsky, President of the Society of Militant Atheists, written in 1933. At that time this Russian leader wrote: "If at the present time (the sixteenth year of the proletarian dictatorship, commencing the second Five-Year Plan of Socialist reconstruction in the Soviet) a minority in the Union adheres to the atheist outlook,\* during the second Five-Year Plan it will be possible and necessary to bring about an even more profound change in this respect, for it is difficult to speak of eradicating the remnants of capitalism from the minds of men if we still leave room for religious ideas which delude the mind—for authoritarian ideas,\*\* ideas about 'transcendental' and 'supernatural' forces. In this period religion must die out in the minds of the millions much more quickly and thoroughly. This definite growth of atheism about which Pope Pius XI complains so bitterly. . . and which he says is 'the most dreadful evil of our time,' is inevitable not only in the U. S. S. R., but in every other country as well." **Religion in the U. S. S. R.** p. 60.

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### A Complete Negative Way Of Life

We had occasion in our last issue to point out that Marxism is a complete negative life principle, in the words of Lenin "advocating 'merciless criticism of everything in existence.'" **The Teachings of Karl Marx**, p. 7.

It is simply a godless society carried to its logical extreme.

Its raised, clenched fist defies God and man, denying all authority, whether absolute or derivative, and denouncing every law, human and divine. Says Yaroslavsky, President of the League of Militant Atheists of the Soviet Union, as he speaks for the state which modern Communism has created: "Neither 'heavenly powers' nor all the exhortations of the priests in all the world can prevent its attaining the aims it has set itself." **Religion in the U. S. S. R.**, p. 59.

What it means to do is nothing less than to "take over" and destroy civilization and uproot all estab-

\*\*\*\*The executive offices of the U. S. S. R. are located here, together with others. At noon and again at six in the evening the chimes of the clock in the highest and the finest of the nineteen towers of the Kremlin wall, situated at the main one of its five entrances, play the "Internationale," and at three o'clock in the afternoon and nine in the evening the "Revolutionary Funeral March" peals forth.

\*\*\*\*\*Pravda—meaning "Truth"—is the title used from the beginning of the Revolution for the official newspaper of the Communist Party, as well as, in combinations, of its subsidiary organizations.

\*According to a report of Stalin himself, there were only "about 1,600,000" members of the Communist Party among Russia's approximately 175,000,000 people in 1933. Cp. **From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union**, p. 41.

\*\*It is to be noted that "authoritarian" is here used in exactly the opposite sense from that in which it is usually used. We prefer to see it so used—that is, in the sense of belief in authority, ultimately derived from God, as opposed to the "totalitarianism" of e. g. a state which regards itself as self-sufficient in an absolute sense.

lished order in every human relation. It has set itself the task of demolishing the three pillars upon which society rests—the Church, the State, the Home. It aims to do this specifically by depriving the individual of the fundamental rights which have always been inherent in life to him—religious and cultural (no private thought), social (abolition of conjugal status, parental authority, family relations, etc.), and economic (destruction of the right of private property).

We shall consider some of these things somewhat more in detail.

## ● Conference Reports

A member of the Southwest Conference of the Minnesota District reports that at its spring session in April "the brethren admitted that the Declaration does not mean what some thought it meant in June, 1938. 'It is no longer satisfactory.'"

The North Park Region Conference of the Minnesota District will submit to the District Pastoral Conference a resolution asking that Synod be memorialized to rescind the Union Articles of 1938.

The Special Northern Conference of the South Dakota District has, according to the April issue of the District paper, petitioned its district to memorialize the 1941 Delegate Synod to reconsider the resolution on Lutheran Union adopted at the 1938 convention.

The Yellow Bank Conference of the Minnesota District, according to a report of one of its members, has decided to memorialize the General Synod in this matter.

## ● For The Record

**Noticiero Luterano**, missionary organ published by our Spanish language congregations in North and South America (Editor: Rev. A. Melendez; Manager: Rev. H. H. Smith), in its April issue takes note of **The Confessional Lutheran**, translates the article "The Beginning of the End," and discusses the union question in another important article. The Record allows itself a reflection: If some of those who speak different languages have no trouble speaking the same thing, I Cor. 1, 10, why is it that others who speak one and the same language have so much difficulty in doing this? . . . The March **North Star Leaguer** (Minnesota District Walther League) reports that Dr. Sverre Norborg spoke to assembled Leaguers and other congregation members of Mt. Olive Church, Minneapolis, on Christianity, on February 18. Dr. Norborg's only connection with the Lutheran Church in America has been a professorship at the Augsburg Seminary of the Free Church. **Skandinaven** on March 31, 1939, reported an interview with Dr. Norborg in which he is credited with the following disapproval of Christianity as it is represented by the Missouri Synod: "In theology it would not hurt to dust off some of the Missouri spirit, which is more interested in dogmatic forms of thought (tankeformer) than it is in the living message." . . . An associated Press dispatch dated at Fredericksburg, Texas, on April 7, brought the following report: "Proposed unification of all Lutheran Churches in the United States and Canada was endorsed here Saturday by a unanimous vote of delegates from five states attending the Texas District of the American Lutheran Church Convention." Our correspondent states that the A. L. C. is thoroughly unionistic in Texas. . . Rev. Walther Degenhart (Missouri

Synod) spoke the invocation and a Reformed pastor the benediction, while another Reformed pastor, a Roman Catholic priest, and a Jewish rabbi held forth on "good will" at an annual Kiwanis session "devoted to support of community churches" on April 3, in Long Island City, N. Y. Mr. Hans Carlson, a layman, submits the pertinent clipping from the local newspaper, with the question: "Why do the Missouri Synod ministers allow this?" . . . The Long Island Star-Journal reported that Rev. Walther E. Schwolert (Missouri Synod) was to take part in the first of a series of "inter-faith" meetings to be held in the Bayside Community Church, Long Island, New York, on April 14. An Episcopal rector, a Catholic priest and a rabbi were among those who planned the meeting in which Catholic and Protestant Christians and Orthodox and Reformed Jews were to cooperate. Father Rock was to pronounce the benediction, and Rabbi Gordis was to speak . . . **Domine, dirige nos!**

## ● On The "Must" List

A most excellent summary of "The Present Status of the Union Movement" has been written by Prof. Walther Albrecht, Professor of Dogmatics at our Springfield Seminary. It evidences a deep insight into, and a sure grasp of, the current union movement and the various issues which it involves, and represents perhaps the most concise and comprehensive presentation of a serious situation that we must now face, which has been written to date. Send to the author for a mimeographed copy, enclosing five cents, or better still, order it in \$1.00 lots, and distribute copies among others. If we do not hear that some thousand copies have been distributed soon, we shall feel under necessity to give the essay space in some future issue of **The Confessional Lutheran**.

In this connection, we once more call attention to the little tract, "The Different Spirit," written by Rev. J. Buenger. This excellent tract ought to be in the hands of every pastor among us and of lay people as well. Above all, none should go into a mixed Mo.-ALC Conference without having read, re-read, studied, digested, and assimilated what is said on the thirty-six pages of this masterly essay, which makes clear what the present union movement is all about. Order from the Lutheran Synod Book Co., Bethany College, Mankato, Minnesota, at 10c per copy or \$1.00 per dozen. We are informed that there are a few hundred copies left.

As for the other two pamphlets by Rev. J. Buenger commended in our last issue, "The Old and the New Differences" is now selling at 50cts, and "The Desired Unity" at 25cts. Both are to be ordered from the Northwestern Publ. House.

None should fail to read carefully Dr. Th. Engelder's informal jottings on "the Unionistic Campaign" in the April issue of the **Conc. Theol. Monthly**. In doing so, it should not be forgotten that what is there said applies to unionism among Lutherans as well as among others. Also the introductory paragraph of his article on "Reason or Revelation", p. 321, should be carefully read and considered.

## ● The Situation In A Nutshell

"Religious liberalism. . . is the tendency which lays more stress on the profession of good intentions and brotherly sentiment than on unity of doctrine."  
—Dr. Wm. Arndt, in **C. T. M.**, Jan., 1940, p. 1.

## ❶ Is The False "Open Question" Theory Of Modern Theology Still An Issue With Regard To The American Lutheran Church?

Replying to this timely question, of which it has been recently stated that it "has not been in controversy since 1868 or thereabouts" (*Amer. Luth.*, Jan., 1940, p. 8), we submit an excerpt from an article captioned "Iowan Oddities" which appeared in the *Lutheraner* of 1875. It will be noted that this article might as well have been written today, and that the name of *The American Lutheran* might be substituted for that of the Iowan Pastor Zocher. (*Cp. Amer. Luth.*, March, 1940, p. 28.) We read:

"That is just what we have always feared about the leaders of the Iowa Synod: the same old thing, and accordingly also altogether the same people as before, only different expressions and phraseologies!

"Only differences in doctrines of faith are divisive according to the teaching of Iowans, Pastor Zocher has declared, and only such doctrines are doctrines of faith, without the acceptance of which one cannot be saved. Manifestly the doctrines of the Antichrist, of a millennial kingdom, of the ministry, and of the Sunday are not such doctrines. Therefore one dare not because of them sever church-fellowship with people who are of a different conviction in such matters.

"Does not Pastor Zocher sense at all that according to this declaration of "church divisiveness" and "doctrines of faith" we would have to dwell together ecclesiastically with the Reformed and all sects, e. g. the Methodists, yes, and finally with Romanists?"\* For we do not believe that the doctrines which e. g. separate us from the Reformed are such that everyone whose position is not right with regard to them, e. g. that of the Reformed, cannot be saved. Or do the Iowans believe that, as their representative has declared? If not, then they would according to the above explanation have to practice church-fellowship, e. g. with the Reformed. That would then be perfect union:—"Vol. XXXI (1875), p. 122.

## ❷ Dare A Church Declare Doctrinal Matters Non-Divisive?

Under the heading "What, in the Last Analysis, is to be Understood by Something's being Supposed to be Non-Divisive?" an article in the *Lehre und Wehre* of 1875 pertinently says with regard to this subject:

"Instead of a Confession, the statement is formulated: It is not divisive. . . . But that is not a confessional statement at all. It is a declaration, the precise purpose of which is to reject any confession statement." (Our emphasis.)

Simple truth is that in such statements the influence of the subjective Reformed spirit is deserting itself. The cited article therefore rightly says further:

"The subjective spirit of such gentlemen, however, Herren eigner Geist) does not consider teachings

\*The point that the *Lutheraner* wants to make is that ALL doctrines of the Bible are doctrines of faith.

\*\*In view of the acceptance of the somewhat similar principles of the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938, it should not seem too surprising that some Missourians are according to recent press reports doing this very thing.

divisive. . . . because it does not side with the orthodox Church in such matters—very similarly as ("Evangelical") unionism does not side with the orthodox Church as respects the Calvinistic doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and therefore declares this doctrine non-divisive, and in view of such a behavior considers itself precisely the true Church.

"The subjective spirit of such gentlemen however also wants to be the orthodox Church and belong to it. Therefore it must go another step beyond the teaching of non-divisiveness, That spirit must stipulate: Whoever does not consider that as non-divisive which we hold to be so, commits serious sin; he will also live in sin until he accepts our rule; and he does not represent the Lutheran Church, but a tendency—something which of course is not at all justifiable in a Lutheran Synod; such people are merely separatists (a fraction), they are at bottom a false Church."

This article, which applies the above truth to the teachings of chiliasm and the Antichrist in particular, should be read in its entirety by every Missourian today. —*Cp. L. u. W.*, XXI, pp. 228-232.

## ❸ Coming Issues

The series of articles on Lutheran Union, in which general confessional principles have been discussed, will be discontinued for the time being.—The discussion of Walther's Theses on the Modern Theory of Open Questions will be resumed in the next issue.—With that issue we also hope to begin the series of articles by Rev. J. Buenger, which have been previously promised.—The installment on Socialism will discuss "Unionism, Socialism, Atheism," drawing largely on Walther for its substance.

Particular discussion of the St. Louis Articles of Agreement is in the offing.

It should hardly be necessary to say that in an undertaking of this kind plans must necessarily be somewhat subject to change at all times.

## ❹ Telling The Tide Of Battle

"You cannot please the Liberals more than by making the distinction between essentials and peripheral doctrines for the purpose of declaring the latter to be evanescent and subject to change. When The Liberals hear the Conservatives say: "Fundamentals are binding, but not the non-fundamentals, they know the battle is going their way." —Dr. Th. Engelder, in *Conc. Theo. Monthly*, Vol X.

\* \* \* \*

(Additional Copies of this issue of *The Confessional Lutheran* may be had at 10c per copy, or in quantities at the special rate of \$1.00 per twenty-five, postpaid, if ordered within fifteen days after date of publication, after which the printer's forms will be destroyed. Only subscribers and contributors are assured copies of every issue; these can, however, depend on a full year's subscription. All subscriptions and inquiries should be addressed to, Rev. A. E. Beck, Business Manager, Foley, Minnesota.)

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

# THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Librarian

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—1 Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF, Editor  
 Red Lake Falls, Minnesota

REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager  
 Foley, Minnesota

"The Confessional Lutheran" is a venture of faith. While the intention is to publish the periodical monthly, it will regularly go to press only so long as the necessary support warrants this. Subscription: One Dollar per Year. Larger amounts are welcome.

Vol. I

June, 1940

No. 6

IN THIS ISSUE: "THE SPIRIT OF THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH"—ARE WE EVADING THE REAL ISSUE?—THE DOGMATIC-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT UNION MOVEMENT—WALTHER'S THESES ON THE MODERN THEORY OF OPEN QUESTIONS—FOR THE RECORD—INTER-SYNODICAL CONFERENCES—A CONFERENCE LETTER—WHAT MODERN COMMUNISM AND SOCIALISM TEACH ABOUT GOD.

## ● "The Spirit Of The American Lutheran Church"

The above is the title of a book, meant to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the ALC, which has just come off the presses of its Lutheran Book Concern. It has been written by Dr. P. H. Buehring, who is a member of the ALC commission on "closer fraternal relations" and who holds a professorship in historical theology on the faculty of that church's seminary at Columbus, Ohio. The book is dedicated to the first president of the ALC, Dr. C. C. Hein, "Pastor, Scholar, Executive, Diplomat." On its 116 pages the author attempts to trace the history of the Buffalo, Iowa and Ohio Synods from their beginnings, tells how they were united in the ALC in 1930, and what has been done by this Church during its first decade. Doctrinal matters are touched but lightly. No indication is given that the Ohio element within the ALC has receded from its old position on predestination and conversion. In fact, the author does not hesitate to re-state the decision of the Ohio Synod to withdraw from the Synodical Conference in 1881 because the Missouri Synod had adopted a doctrine concerning election which it declared to be "Calvinizing." On the other hand, he states that the Ohio Synod "reaffirmed its adherence to the doctrine of election as contained in the Formula of Concord and taught by the great teachers of the Lutheran Church." (P. 76.) The commentary on Romans by F. W. Stelthorn, the Synod's "specialist on predestination and conversion," is declared to be "one of the finest interpretations of the Apostle's great epistle in the English language." (P. 80.) The entire book is permeated with a unionistic spirit, which reaches its climax when it is stated that in the ALC's "endeavors to establish closer fraternal relations" a sufficient doctrinal basis for the future establishment of church-fellowship with the Missouri Synod has been established, while its "commission negotiating with representatives of the United Lutheran Church

has likewise come to an agreement with them." P. 106.

The author nonchalantly speaks of "overemphasis upon purity of doctrine," p. 32, of a "Missourian theory" of the call, and of a "Missourian theory" of congregational independence, p. 37.

"Firm adherence to the Lutheran Confessions was a characteristic of the Buffalo Synod throughout its history; no Lutheran church-body in America has been more orthodox in this sense than it." P. 21. It was "not indifference on the part of the founders toward Lutheran doctrines and the Lutheran Confessions" that causes one to look in vain for even the least trace of any confessional statement in the first constitution of the Ohio Synod, P. 70. The origin of the Iowa Synod is traced to the "missionary spirit" of Pastor Loehe rather than to his break with Missouri because of his opposition to its orthodoxy, P. 35. On the other hand, Walther and Wyneken had **compromised** with Loehe in 1851, "but the compromise, like most compromises in matters of religious conviction, was only of brief duration." P. 37. (If the author calls the understanding which Walther and Wyneken effected with Loehe in 1851 a compromise on their part, we wonder what he would call the concessions which Missouri made to the ALC in 1938; and in view of what he has further said, we wonder how long he expects the latter agreement to last.) "No doctrinal differences were at issue" between Ohio, Buffalo, and Iowa when they began to negotiate union in 1920; "the only questions to consider were the practical desirability and the feasibility of a merger." P. 84. These are a few of the historical inaccuracies of this book.

In Dr. Buehring's book the ALC has given the Missouri Synod's Union Committee something to work on, and indeed the whole Synod has been given something to think about, and—to help guide it in its action in the present union movement. The proportionately large amount of space which the author has found it necessary to devote to the history of the bodies merged within the ALC, and then of this

body itself, in spite of the delicacy of the task of facing some of the historical facts in the development of these bodies, should convince the most skeptical of the necessity of an historical approach in determining the "spirit" of a church.

Beck & Burgdorf

## ❶ Are We Evading The Real Issue?

It is rather astonishing that the one burning question which has caused divisions in the Lutheran Church, has been so carefully evaded of late. That question is: What part, if any, does man's conduct play in the plan of salvation? Writers and pamphleteers have been reminded of this more than once, in recent months, but most of them have maintained a stony silence. On the other hand, all manner of other issues have been thrust into the forefront.

We heard a group of men discussing Lutheran reunion. Their unanimous opinion seemed to be: such matters as the resurrection of the saints, the conversion of the Jews and the exact mechanics of inspiration are relatively unimportant, so why should they keep Lutherans apart? Away with such questions, but give us reunion.

In reality it is **not** these questions that have caused Lutherans to separate in the past. Such matters take second place to the one great question upon which man's salvation actually depends.\* Is our salvation due solely to the grace of God in Christ alone? Or does man's foreseen conduct, either good or ill, have a part in the matter?

Not only Lutherans, but all Christians have had this question to face. It was the major issue when our Lord was on earth. One is dumbfounded, again and again, to hear men preach on the Crucifixion, and explain it away after the manner of the sects. Men who ought to know better, say thoughtlessly that our Saviour was crucified because the Jewish leaders were jealous of His success, because He attacked organized religious dictatorship, or even because He laid down a new code of conduct in His Sermon on the Mount, and set Himself up as a new Moses, and His teachings as a new code of laws.

These half-baked ideas are absorbed from the sectarian books that fill many a parson's shelves, and from the lectures of liberal churchmen in the universities which many are attending, hoping to receive an academic degree, so that when they hasten to the church door to engage in back-slapping with the departing congregation, all men may address them as "Doctor".

Our Lord antagonized the church leaders of His day when He condemned their outward righteousness; when He showed them that the Pharisee, despite his good outward deportment, went down to his house unjustified\*\*, when on many occasions He pointed out the utter uselessness of trusting in one's good works, rather than in the grace of God and the merits of His only begotten Son.

Read once more the story of St. Stephen. He was accused of having taught that the Law of Moses was set aside, and salvation is possible only through Jesus Christ. Simon Peter was persecuted because of the same truth. St. Paul was beaten, driven from place to place, cast into prison and finally executed because of the same truth.

\*The author of the present essay does not, of course, wish to minimize the importance of the *Sola Scriptura* principle which is also at stake in the present union movement.—Editor.

\*\*In a subjective sense.

The same question agitated the minds of men in the early councils. By 529 the issue had become so acute that the Councils of Orange were the result, and their Decrees set forth the correct answer with surprising clearness. Luther's clash with his opponents was based on the same question. Luther declared all other issues to be "childish" and "remote", and he mentioned the papacy, indulgences and purgatory as such secondary things. He declared that there is but one major issue back of it all.

Aonio Paleario (1500-1570), realized the importance of the cardinal question, and his little book, "The Benefits of Christ's Death" had wide circulation, was translated into other languages, but the many thousands of copies all but disappeared. Men were not pleased when this well-known Italian writer declared that salvation is possible only through the perfect righteousness and the atoning death of the Saviour. By the year 1855, only one copy of this book was believed to exist. Some 300 years ago it was translated into English. In 1857 Dr. Walther translated it into German and published it. One of the oldest pastors in our Synod possessed a German copy, which he called "a rare, famous book". He said, in writing, "This book was a great, terribly persecuted martyr. Perhaps a hundred thousand were burned and destroyed." This little book was distasteful even to numerous non-Catholics, because it touches upon the one cardinal issue that has caused so many divisions in the past. The writer is at present attempting to do it into idiomatic English.

Two hundred years ago, when John Wesley discovered salvation by grace alone, and began preaching it, every church door was closed against him. He was mobbed on the streets, stoned, pelted with decayed vegetables, driven from city to city, in a land then as nearly 100 percent Protestant as any country of the day. Lipsky, one of his recent biographers, grasped the point, for he shows that the doctrine of salvation through the merits of Christ alone is distasteful to man's natural pride. It arouses antagonism not only in the unrighteous, but more particularly in those who attend church diligently and believe their good outward deportment toward religion is an example to others. It is lamentable that Wesley later confused Justification and Sanctification.

One need not mention the decades of controversy over this very question, or the schisms that have been caused when men were courageous enough to contend for it. Nor need one recall the weak compromises that have come about in Lutheran circles when both *Sola Gratia* and *intuitu fidei* have been allowed equal rights in shifty-eyed articles of agreement. And as recently as three years ago, representatives of all the leading non-Catholic denominations met in Edinburgh, and placed *Sola Gratia* on an equal footing with foreseen good conduct. Read their printed reports, readily available from federated church headquarters in America, and be convinced.

It seems incredible that a teaching which formed so large a part of the work of Dr. Walther and his associates (to say nothing of the 11th article of our formula of Concord), should be kept so carefully out of sight today. Why is it not faced? Why are other matters exhibited in triumph, as though they were the real issues which separate us?

Doctrinal agreement, and a united Lutheranism are doubtless excellent things. But if these are gained at the cost of ignoring the one cardinal issue in every doctrinal controversy from the first century onward, no good can ever come of it.



If our religious journals bring this subject once more into the open, and face it honestly, then much good may come of it. Surely in our day no sincere Christian will allow man's spiritual pride to stand in the way of a clear-cut, unambiguous testimony as to the completeness of our Saviour's work. It will mean, of course, that we confess that there is nothing that you and I can do, whether we call it foreseen or not, to contribute in the slightest degree to our salvation. Why try to steal even the smallest part of the credit to which our blessed Saviour alone is entitled? Nor can we understand the men who register bored indifference when the subject is brought up. One cannot be indifferent toward a subject which lies at the very heart of religion. Why not bring it out into the open? —F. R. W.

## ● The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of The Present Union Movement\*

\* \* \* \*

### With Special Reference to the Specific Doctrines Involved

By Rev. J. Buenger

\* \* \* \*

#### An Introductory Statement

As a result of the recent union movement, there are now two factions within the Missouri Synod.

There are those—by no means so numerous as it seemed a short time ago—who are firmly convinced that in the doctrines of the inerrancy of the Scriptures, of conversion, and of election, a real unity between the ALC and the Synodical Conference has been reached, and that the remaining differences are not sufficiently important to justify a continuation of disunion. These, therefore, feel in conscience bound to work for union, and some of them do not hesitate to anticipate it occasionally.

There are others—and their number is growing—who see clearly that the alleged understanding concerning the main differences rests on false appearances, and that in the minor points the remaining differences, though not of equal importance with the former, are nevertheless just as divisive of church-fellowship as they were at the time of the fathers.

Between these two factions there is the great number of those—most likely the great majority—who as yet are unable to see their way clearly and to form a definite opinion of their own.

Is there a possibility of overcoming this deplorable dissension in our midst and of having the old unity restored? We have the hope that there is, and it is the purpose of these articles to prepare a way to peace and understanding.

The very nature of the present disagreement makes it impossible to discuss the matter without saying things that will be disagreeable to some brethren. And this is true of those who share our own conviction as well as of those who favor union. Already there is presented to us now and then a catalog of statements of which we are told that they should never have been made. On the other hand, we meet with criticism and judgments as to our endeavors which we feel to be unjustified. But what of it? Of what consequence is the little bit of honor that we poor sinners are capable of, compared with the honor and truth of God which are at stake? Let us not forget that true men of God have always regarded even abuse and slander which may have

been heaped upon them during a doctrinal controversy as comparatively unimportant, while, on the other hand, it is and always has been the habit of false teachers to whine and cry out at the cruel treatment which they as poor martyrs have to suffer at the hand of those who point out their errors. Let us, therefore, as far as possible, overlook and ignore whatever may seem to hurt a little here and there and objectively discuss those questions which must be cleared up if peace and harmony are to be restored.

After reading the articles on union in the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, the *Lutheran Witness*, and especially in *The American Lutheran*, the present writer sees only one way out of the present chaos, namely,—to lay the whole matter before the brethren, presenting the burning questions which are disturbing us today in the light of their historical background, thus enabling those who are yet undecided to form an opinion of their own. And since those who are now in favor of a union assure us that they would not surrender one jot or tittle of the divine truth which has been entrusted to our Lutheran Church, but are seeking a union only on the basis of a real and true unity in doctrine, there is hope that after weighing the evidence submitted in the following articles, they may find it necessary to re-examine their position.

\* \* \* \*

#### The Root of the Matter—The Chicago Theses

Now, in order to get at the root of our differences, it is necessary to go back to the main cause and beginning of the present confusion—the union movement of twenty years ago, which culminated in the Chicago Theses. The present serious disagreement in our midst is merely the flaring up of an old flame, sparks of which have been smouldering under the ashes for two decades, and therefore the only way to settle the dispute is to begin at the beginning and to show the inner connection of the present union movement with that of twenty years ago.

For those who are not acquainted with this recent phase of Church history, the following brief information will be helpful.

Up to the year 1920 little or no progress had been made toward a mutual understanding at the official colloquies which were held between the representatives of the Synodical Conference and the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo Synods. According to statements from both sides, the matter looked almost hopeless, when suddenly the report was spread that, contrary to all expectations, complete unity had been established in the doctrine of conversion. Great was the joy in all synods which were interested in the matter. But no sooner did the Theses accepted in Chicago become known than the objection was raised by some who had for many years studied the questions involved that the wording of these theses admitted of two meanings, namely,—that of the Missourians as well as that of the opponents; and as a matter of fact they were almost universally understood in our sense within the Synodical Conference and in the sense of our opponents throughout the length and breadth of the Iowa and Ohio Synods.

Here at the very beginning of this discrepancy, when it was comparatively easy to decide the issue, no stone should have been left unturned until this matter was cleared up. The first and foremost duty of the Intersynodical Conference would have been to take up the objections raised against the wording of those theses. These objections should have been either refuted or accepted and heeded in the proper manner. But neither one of these two things was done. While the matter was in suspense, discussions

\*Thanks are due Rev. M. Buenger for assistance in preparing the present essay for print.

were carried on as though nothing had happened. The first false step came to be one in a series of mistakes, and in spite of uninterrupted warnings and protests the whole work was finished. And to this day these theses are praised by some members of our synod as a good Lutheran confession, while they are rejected by others as a unionistic document.

In 1929 the Missouri Synod took official action in the matter of the Chicago Theses. The examining committee which had been appointed to deal with the protests raised against the theses had positively endorsed the objections and declared the theses to be inadequate.\* "At times," it stated "they do not touch upon the point of controversy; at times they are so phrased that both parties can find in them their own opinion; at times they incline more to the position of our opponents than to our own." (Proceedings of the 34th Regular Convention of the Missouri Synod, River Forest, 1929, p. 110.) Pursuant to the report of its Examining Committee, Synod refused to accept the Chicago Theses for two reasons—

"a) Because many serious objections have been raised by members of Synod, which, in our opinion, should be carefully considered and eventually taken into account in any further work concerning the theses.

"b) Because the omission of all historical data in working out the theses was evidently not conducive to a full understanding on the part of all colloquents. We must begin with the *status controversiae*." (P. 113.)\*\*

As to future discussions with our opponents, the following instructions were given in 1929\*\*\*—

"a) That the move toward fellowship between the Ohio and Iowa Synods, on the one hand, and the Norwegian Lutheran Church, on the other hand, be first adjusted according to the word of God.\*\*\*\*

"b) That future deliberations proceed from the exact point of controversy and take into account the pertinent history." (P. 113.)\*\*

If these two conditions had been fulfilled, the results of the latest discussions would have been different. By first attempting to adjust the ALC's relationship with the Norwegian Church, the shortcomings of the Opgjoer would have to be discussed;

\*Dr. F. Pieper, Dr. P. E. Kretzmann, and Prof. G. Chr. Barth were among the members of the examining Committee. Unfortunately Dr. Kretzmann, who is so well versed in this matter, seems somehow or another not to have been appointed to a corresponding or similar committee since that time.—Editor.

\*\*The Confessional Lutheran has pointed out time and again—and will continue to do so—that it is practically impossible to understand any Church's present position without reference to its past history. Yet this is actually being attempted today.—Editor.

\*\*\*It will be noted that these instructions have been quite disregarded in the present sequence of the union movement.

\*\*\*\*Ohio and Iowa were then negotiating with each other toward the union which has since been realized in the ALC, and with the Norwegians toward the affiliation which has been realized in the American Lutheran Conference. The soundness of the 1929 resolutions is reflected in a recent letter of Dr. Theo. Graebner to the editor of *The Confessional Lutheran*, in which it is stated: "As far as I am concerned, I see such practical difficulties—especially due to the scandal of opposition altars in the mission fields and also the connection of the ALC with other Lutheran bodies in projects that distinctly involve not externals only—I suppose there will be no fellowship in my lifetime." How can anyone think to ignore the unionism which the ALC is practicing today, or expect to see it dismissed from the present discussion?

and by proceeding from the exact point of controversy and taking into account the pertinent history of the controversy, doctrinal differences would have come to light which to this day have never been settled.

It is, by the way, right here that the most incisive question of principle between us and our critics sets in. As soon as we quote former utterances of our opponents, comparing them with those of a later date, in order to show that changes in phraseology are to be taken into consideration when judging their present declarations, we are immediately told that references to former statements of our opponents are entirely out of order, because they do not prove anything for their present doctrinal position—as though we were trying to produce the foolish argument that because our opponents formerly taught errors, they are doing it now. In other words, while we take into account the pertinent history, others insist on proceeding in an unhistorical manner, judging the declarations of the ALC without reference to their statements of former and more recent times. As soon as we agree on the principle that omission of all historical data is not conducive to a full understanding, that we must take into account what was said and written in former times, and that we must begin negotiations with the precise *status controversiae*—as soon as we agree on these principles, the main cause of the present disagreement will have been removed.

But we shall now proceed with our account of occurrences.

At the River Forest Convention in 1929 the protests against the Chicago Theses were taken into consideration. It was regarded for these protests which prevented the convention from accepting these theses. But they were not rejected either. On the contrary, the question whether or not the protests were fully justified was left open, and it has ever since been an undecided question in our midst. All efforts to bring this matter to a final decision have so far failed.

The failure to bring this disagreement to a definite conclusion might not have done so much harm, if the union movement had stopped then and there. But it was continued. Encouraged by the partial success and the approbation which the Chicago Theses, in spite of the action of synod, had found, even in some of our periodicals, the Iowa, Ohio, and Buffalo Synods, united in the meantime in the ALC, renewed their efforts at achieving a union with the Synodical Conference. While the Wisconsin and the Norwegian Synods, made wise by former experiences, for the time being refused the advances of the ALC, the Missouri Synod again entered into negotiation with them. The results of these latest transactions were laid before the jubilee convention at St. Louis in 1938 without giving the pastors and congregations ample time to examine the whole document carefully from all angles. Thus the Declaration of the ALC representatives and the report of Committee 16 were accepted in the rush of an exceedingly busy and much occupied convention.

No wonder that afterwards there arose in the hearts of some of those who had voted for acceptance, doubts as to whether they had done the right thing. And we now have the sad spectacle that, in consequence of this hasty decision, the Missouri Synod, once known throughout the world for its wonderful unity in matters of doctrine, has become a house divided against itself. Is not the restoration of peace and harmony in our midst of far greater importance than external union with other church-

bodies? There is still time to readjust matters. Nor is there any better way to remedy an evil than by going back to its roots and seeking its real origin, and first of all removing the cause or causes of it. Hence, the present confusion being a direct result of the fact that divergence of opinion regarding the Chicago Theses was never brought to a definite decision in our midst, but deliberately left open, it stands to reason that we must first of all repair this neglect, in order to restore harmony and mutual understanding among ourselves. Once it is generally realized and admitted that the objections raised against the Chicago Theses are well founded, we shall encounter no great difficulty in coming to an understanding about the ALC Declaration, which is in perfect harmony with the Chicago Theses.

Following the order of the Chicago Theses, we shall show the essential agreement between them and the ALC Declaration as regards each doctrine in question.

(To Be Continued)

## ❶ Walther's Theses On The Modern Theory Of Open Questions

(Continued From April Issue)

It may be well to state once more that in Walther's Propositions on the Modern Theory of Open Questions Theses II-VI are to serve the purpose of clearing away a number of misunderstandings, based upon arguments which may, each in their place, well serve another purpose, but which can never serve to establish a false theory of open questions. We believe we can be quite brief in our discussion of Theses II-IV. Theses V and VI, however, require considerably more attention and emphasis.

\*\*\*\*

### Thesis II

"Even an error of an individual member of the Church against the clear Word of God does not at once actually deprive him of his ecclesiastical, fraternal, or professional fellowship."

It is to be noted that Walther here does not have in mind the question of what a whole church-body may deliberately teach. He has in mind only the immediate result—not the ultimate effect—of a doctrinal error on the part of an individual member of the Church.

In such a case there will and must of course be admonition of such a brother on the part of others. That is the first, though not the last thing, which will ensue as a result of his error. And "if in the process of admonition it at last becomes evident, also through some non-fundamental error," Walther rightly says in his discussion of the material related to this thesis, "that the erring one knowingly, stubbornly, and persistently contradicts the Word of God, that he thus subverts the organic foundation of faith (the Scriptures) by his error, then also such an erring one, like all those who persist in mortal sin, is not to be tolerated, but fraternal fellowship is indeed to be denied him." *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 107.

Walther maintains, and properly, that when errorists stubbornly reject all demonstrations of error from God's Word, they thus reveal that even though they do not apparently want to disturb the dogmatic foundation or analogy of faith (that is, what is usually called "fundamentals" in distinction from "non-fundamentals"), yet, so far as they are concerned, they shatter and overthrow the organic foundation, that is Scripture itself—"To declare everything out-

side of fundamental articles to be in the nature of open questions", Walther says, "is something altogether unheard of. . . . Through nothing does an erring one manifest more that his error is a fundamentally subversive one than through this that he thereby overthrows God's Word, which can be done as well by opposition to non-fundamental as to fundamental Bible teachings, yes even by the manner in which problems are dealt with." This is the case when the Scripturalness of some truth held by a first party (Missouri) is admitted, while contrary error is maintained in the midst of a second party (ALC), and it is, over against efforts to bring about real agreement through renunciation of the latter, simply finally declared as a matter of principle: "It is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines." (Sandusky Resolutions.)

Ref.: *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 66; 107-110 (*C. T. M.*, Apr. 1939, pp. 26ff; May, pp. 351-353.)

A proper consideration of this thesis leaves no room for open, non-divisive questions in the field of Christian doctrine.

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### Thesis III

"Even the arising of an error which militates against God's Word in a whole Church does not in itself constitute such a Church a false Church with which an orthodox Church would have to break off relations."

The emphasis in this thesis is on the mere arising of an error, which does not in itself at once deprive a Church of its orthodox character. The question is not one of whether a Church can knowingly persist in error as though this mattered little in any given case.

The Missouri Synod can itself, if this be permitted, serve as an example which well illustrates this point. In 1938 the Missouri Synod erred, due to too precipitate action, in declaring certain errors of the ALC non-divisive of fellowship, in the "doctrinal basis" accepted that year, and thus sanctioned the teaching of such errors alongside of the truth. However, we have the coincidence that the Missouri Synod will rescind this action now that it has come to a realization of the real implications of its precipitate action in the present union situation. Such rescission will show that the synod is not willing consciously to remain in error.

Walther merely wants to point out in this thesis, in other words, that just as in the case of an individual Christian, so it is possible for a whole Church to err in weakness. But he rightly insists with emphasis, citing Luther, that one must distinguish between merely erring and remaining in error. *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 67. He cites J. Gerhardt to the effect that not the least error, if it be discerned, can be connived at for even a single hour. He also calls attention to the fact that as a result the Church never has peace for any length of time, and that it is just the orthodox Church which more than others presents a picture of being rent asunder. Far from being something which can be thrown up to a faithful Church and its ministers, however, this impresses upon them the seal of membership in the true Church Militant.

What has already been said under Thesis II with respect to individuals applies as well to whole Churches.

Ref.: *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 66ff., 110ff., 113ff. (*C. T. M.*, p. 353ff.)

A proper consideration of this thesis leaves no room for open, non-divisive questions in the field of Christian doctrine.

## Thesis IV

"A Christian can be so simple as not to be able to be convinced even that an error of a secondary fundamental nature which he entertains is contrary to the Scriptures, and as to persist in it, without therefore necessarily having to be excluded from the orthodox Church."

The question here again is not one of what a whole Church may confess or what individuals within it may teach (such as is the case as regards the reservations made by the ALC in its Declaration, and as have been sanctioned by the St. Louis "doctrinal basis" of 1938); it is rather a question of carrying persons (not their error, which dare not be condoned), who are so simple as to be unable to grasp the nature of their error or the consequence of their position.

With respect to such a situation Walther says: "Although in a case of erring in weakness, the **erring person** is to be tolerated, his error is in the first place never to be tolerated, and that is true even though the same may appear to be ever so insignificant and harmless, when the same militates against God's clear Word. **Such an error dare therefore never be treated as an open question.**" The Church has no power to remit any part of the doctrine which has been entrusted to her as a spiritual mother for the nurture of her members. "So it is certain that since all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, the Church dare permit nothing that Scripture contains to be adulterated or given up, but she must watch over every Biblical truth, however unimportant it may appear to be, and step up against every error which is against Scripture, however insignificant it may seem to be."

Ref.: *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 67ff; 105-107. (*C. T. M.*, Apr., 1939, pp. 260ff.)

A proper consideration of this thesis leaves no room for open, non-divisive questions in the field of Christian doctrine.

## ☛ For The Record

At the Chicago colloquy of the Union Committee of the Missouri Synod and representatives of the other synods of the Synodical Conference on April 12th and 13th, the chairman of Missouri's committee voiced the sentiment that the Lutheran Confessions contain contrary exegesis, without however pointing out an instance of such contradiction—and not without being challenged by others. It was admitted that the ALC Declaration's statement that God purposes to justify "those who have come to faith" must be changed. It was also conceded that Missouri might not have been right in making concessions to the ALC with respect to divergent views on other points at issue. One member of the Missouri committee stated that we have no sufficient basis for union. The patent unionism of the leading ALC commissioner and the fact that the Declaration is a bad weave throughout were other points dwelt on in the discussion. With respect to the oft-repeated statement that the ALC commissioners have long since ceased to teach errors formerly held by them, the leading representative of the Wisconsin Synod asked the pertinent question: if they have thrown away the kernel, why should they be so concerned about retaining the empty shell? In view of such a realistic situation the "favorable and optimistic" report publicized in the *May Clergy Bulletin* of the Missouri Synod seems rather perplexing. . . In the *Lutheran Witness* of May 14 Dr. Graebner admits to

an extent the unreliability of his pamphlet, *The Historic Lutheran Position*: "Omission points were overlooked" in adducing direct quotation from Walther," he states, when vital portions of Walther's statement were omitted. The author fails to give a satisfactory explanation of the importation of certain words into Walther's statement, resulting in a misrepresentation of his position which can well serve the interest of liberal tendencies and lax practice. (Cp. e. g. *The American Lutheran*, March, 1940, p. 28.) All of this was pointed out in the April issue of *The Confessional Lutheran*. . . *The American Lutheran* has in its May issue spread a page of doubt with regard to the correctness of the Augsburg Confession's Scriptural position, when the latter says: "that it is right for Christians—to engage in just wars." (*Trigl. Conc.*, p. 51). . . *The Lutheran Seattinal* (Norwegian Synod) of May 13 contains an article in which "A Layman Views the Church-Union Movements." Thrice blessed is such a church-body, however small and much despised it may be in the eyes of men, as has laymen who can speak with the sound conviction of Mr. N. Tjernagel, author of the article; whose officials and theologians encourage such testimony; and whose press is not too much muzzled to allow such voices to sound forth in its official organs. . . "God preserve unto us a pious ministry!" (Walther's dying prayer.)

## ☛ Inter-Synodical Conferences

### At St. Paul, Minn.

On May 7 a conference was held at Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota, between Missouri and ALC pastors, and with pastors of other synods of the Synodical Conference participating. Dr. M. Reu, Commissioner and leading theologian of the ALC read an essay on Prayer-Fellowship, in which he is reported to have attacked the position of the Missouri Synod and its fathers, our treasured Lutheran Confessions, and the Word of God itself. "Wir muessen aus-legen, nicht ein-legen"—that was his theme-sentence. He then proceeded, however, to do exactly what he had warned against. For, in the Reformed and "newer" (modern) Lutheran fashion, he treated Rom. 16, 17 in an eisegetical\* manner, endeavoring to make it read: "Mark them which seek to cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Other well-known passages which warn against unionism were emasculated in the same subjective way—that is to say in such a way as to make the judgment of men's hearts, which must ever remain the prerogative of God, the criterion of fellowship, instead of simply judging men's confession and practice objectively, in accordance with such words of God as e. g. I Cor. 10, 15: "Judge ye what I say." One pastor has stated that Dr. Reu will not bow to the authority of the Scriptures and is guilty of "weasel exegesis." The essayist's strong subjectivism led him to state that he would unite in prayer-worship with such sectarians as Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and the like, if only they confess that Jesus is the Son of God and the the Mediator between God and men.

\*For the benefit of our lay readers, this simply means subjectively to read into the Scriptures one's own notions, instead of objectively reading out of them the truth which they contain. It is a fundamental principle of Lutheranism to understand the Scriptures as they read. It is the spirit of the Reformed Church rather to rest on an "interpretation" of them.

There was no reply by ALC men to the question of others, why they will not accept Acts 13, 48 as a *sedes doctrinae*\*\* on the doctrine of election.

One of our reporters states that this occasion was one on which "the most sorry mess of unionism was peddled which he ever witnessed." It is also reported that such as may previously have entertained any doubts on this score became convinced that it is unfortunately not the case that even more conservative ALC men in Minnesota are agreed with Missouri in all things and anxious to share its position.

Strong opposition to Dr. Reu's liberal views is reported as having been voiced by men of the Missouri, Wisconsin, Norwegian, and especially also the Slovak Synod.

As far as we are concerned, there forces itself upon us more and more the question: how long are manifestly unorthodox Lutheran teachers to be permitted to disseminate their erroneous views among our own clergy, on the assumption that we are to carry our treasures to them?

### At Rochelle, Ill.

A Chicago pastor who attended a meeting of Missouri and ALC pastors at Rochelle, Illinois, on May 20th, reports that Missourian pastors had to disclaim Dr. Arndt's Interpretation of Rom. 16, 17. He states it as his conviction that the Missouri Synod and the ALC are "plenty far apart."

### At Cleveland, Ohio

Commenting on the report of an inter-synodical pastoral conference at Cleveland, Ohio, on April 15, as it is contained in the *Lutheran Herald* (Norwegian Lutheran Church of America) of May 28, a member of another synod asks: "Why are the Missouri men hobnobbing with the ULC, ALC, and NLCA in such gatherings?"

## ⊕ A Conference Letter

Note: The following letter was written by a pastor to other members of his conference.

Okabena, Minn., May 21, 1940

Dear Brethren:

"After all, it is the membership of Synod that must pass judgment." C. T. M., X, 936. It is up to the membership to pass judgment on the 1938 St. Louis and Sandusky union resolutions. We have NO official leaders in the sense that they alone are to decide what we should do or say concerning the union movement.

Our 1938 union resolutions must be rescinded, and you all have a choice of a number of important reasons for such action. We may reject the ALC resolutions as unacceptable, but we hardly have a right to request the ALC to rescind them as our first and only move. Making such a request of the ALC would in a way be a declaration on our part that our resolutions and what our Synod has done since, are all good, and it would blame the ALC for the confusion. The fact is that our own resolutions are the primary cause for all the confusing troubles we are having.

Members of Committee No. 16 honestly felt that our Brief Statement was the real basis of their report. But in fairness to all who interpret that document otherwise, these committee members and the Missouri Synod to its last man should admit that: According to the words used in our 1938 union articles, various explanations can be made. We are

forced to grant, e. g., the interpretation that the St. Louis & Sandusky resolutions are in agreement. Suppositions and unwritten reports and remarks from the floor, which played such a strong part in moving our delegates to accept Committee No. 16 Report, do not count now. The words of the Report itself are now the basis for discussion. Anyone who has not yet concluded that our 1938 union resolution must be rescinded has either not given our document sufficient study or else does not agree with Synod in general as to what the necessary requirements for church fellowship are.

It is cause for embarrassment that our great synod made a mistake in St. Louis, 1938. But it is no disgrace to confess our mistake and to rescind it. We are fallible men. One cause for embarrassment in the matter is that the resolutions contain no clear statement of our democratic principle that such a document must first pass the inspection of the rank and file membership of Synod and be accepted by them before becoming valid.

Prof. W. Albrecht, 1309 Concordia Court, Springfield, Ill., has carefully compiled many objections to our 1938 union resolutions. It is a conference paper and may be ordered from him—5c per copy, mimeographed.

Prof. P. E. Kretzmann, 801 De Mun Ave., St. Louis, Mo., recently prepared and had mimeographed an essay (12 pages) on "Fundamental and Non-fundamental Doctrines and Church Fellowship." 15c per copy; 10c in quantities. Both of these papers deserve the attention of all our pastors and professors especially.

A valuable effort to find out the opinion of our clergy on the St. Louis—Sandusky resolutions was made last year by Rev. A. E. Beck, Foley, Minn. The question he put to us was as fair as any man could have put it. Quibbling about synodical procedure in this matter counteracted against the quibblers.

**The Confessional Lutheran**, edited by Pastor Paul H. Burgdorf, Red Lake Falls, Minn., is bringing its readers a wealth of necessary information. Brother A. E. Beck of Foley, Minn., is circulation manager of this monthly. The price is one dollar per year. It is not an open forum. It is dedicated to preserve Confessional Lutheranism. Neither Pastor Burgdorf nor Pastor Beck consider themselves a kind of necessary Missouri Synod Moses to guide us through our union wilderness. Both of them appreciate everything that is done and said for Confessional Lutheranism, with them or without them. Carefully reading **The Confessional Lutheran** is time well spent for any Lutheran.

The undersigned took part in joint conferences with the ALC men of Southwestern Minnesota, and his activities extend beyond group meetings. Recently a fifth joint meeting failed to materialize because of a misunderstanding as to the place of meeting. At our own meeting then held at Iudla, Minn., where our men were gathered, I declared myself against joint conferences with men of the ALC under the circumstances. Because of the faulty St. Louis and Sandusky resolutions, we never had good reasons for joint conferences. With the best of intentions, the meetings have failed of their purpose which was to find out just how we differ with the ALC. Further meetings are also wrong procedure, in my opinion, if the respective resolutions are considered their basis. Such meetings I shall no longer attend if they are held.

Fraternally, George Schweikert

\*\*Seat of doctrine, that is,—a clear passage of Scripture on which a doctrine is based.

## ● What Modern Communism And Socialism Teach About God

Karl Marx, founder, tells us as to the fundamental tenet of Communism and Socialism:—

**"The idea of god\* is the keystone of a perverted civilization. It must be destroyed. The root of liberty, of equality, of culture, is atheism."** (Cp. Luth. Witness, Vol. 54, No. 3, p. 43.)

In the introduction to Lenin's Religion we read:—

**"Atheism is a natural and inseparable part of Marxism, of the theory and practice of scientific Socialism.**

"In accordance with their fundamental philosophical outlook, Marx and Engels always called themselves materialists. In developing their materialist philosophy, Marx and Engels had at first thoroughly to analyze the ideas which came from the religious world of thought. As early as 1844, Marx coined the phrase: **'The criticism of religion is the beginning of all criticism.'**

"This analysis was accomplished with such completeness that later the atheistic character of their mature philosophy seemed to require little emphasis and was taken for granted. The same is true of many Marxists and not least of Lenin. It is not an accident, therefore, that the works of our great masters, Marx, Engels, and Lenin, contain no complete and systematic statement of their proletarian atheism. It is not usual to talk of obvious facts." (P. 3.)

Or again, we read:—

**"Atheism is an integral part of Marxism. Consequently a class-conscious Marxist party must carry on propaganda in favor of atheism. . . The final emancipation of the toiling masses from religion will occur only after the proletarian revolution, only in a Communist society."** (Loc. cit., p. 5. All Emphases are ours.)

Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, one of the oldest and foremost members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and one of its leading ideologists, a member of its Central Committee—the "Big Ten" of which Stalin is the secretary, and as such the dictator of Russia as well as of International Communism—is President of the League of Militant Atheists of the Soviet Union. In this capacity he is entrusted with the task of rooting out religion in Russia. In his book, *Religion in the U. S. S. R.*, he says, with an evident attempt at a great deal of emphasis:—

**"If the world is controlled by a god, if the fate of people is in the hands of god, his saints, angels, devils, and fiends—then what sense is there in the organized struggle of the workers and peasants, in the creation of a Leninist Party? What sense is there in the Socialist reconstruction of society? All this could be destroyed by a mere wave of the 'Almighty' hand of god—who happily exists only in the imagination of believers—nowhere else! . . . It is necessary that every person, that every peasant and worker sees things as they are, without the intervention of gods, saints, angels, fiends, goblins, werewolves, and other spirits, good or evil."** (P. 30ff.)

It should not be forgotten that with the question

\*Communists thus always write "god" with an initial body letter, because to them the word merely stands for an idea which "exists only in the imagination of believers." "Communism", on the other hand, whenever it refers to what their "Party" believes in, is always written with a capital "C".

of God there goes also the fundamental question of authority.\*\* If there is no absolute, divine authority, then there can neither be any absolute human authority or law, whether moral or social, in the civic or political realm of things. Communism does not shrink from drawing such a conclusion. Its *Manifesto* declares:—

**"Law, morality, religion, are to him (the proletarian) so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests."** (P. 20.)

To a Communist, Church, State, and Home are simply not the three great pillars upon which all society rests.

Nor should it be overlooked that there is another fundamental question involved here,—viz., the problem of origins.

With other evolutionists, and particularly with Darwinists—according to even its most recent publications Marxism has not yet outgrown this long discarded puerility of modern "science"—Communism is content to suppose that, like Topsy, the world has "just growed," and now that, like that charming lady, it has come to be of age and quite fascinating. Communism may as well "take over" and claim it as its own.

Christianity begins "in the beginning" (Gen. 1, 1), and—once one accepts the necessary and fundamental concept of God—offers a rational explanation of all things. James Clarke Maxwell has well said: "There never was a theory of the universe that did not need a God to make it go." (Cp. Th. Graebner, *God and the Cosmos*, p. 91.) It is because God has, more completely than in nature's revelation, in the inspired Scriptures' revelation of Himself, given to it a vantage point on which to stand, that Christianity has been able to move the world. Destroy the concept of God, and there has been destroyed the foundation upon which all the great controlling influences of life must necessarily rest. Modern Communism and Socialism leave man hopelessly adrift upon life's turbulent sea, without a chart or compass whereby he might be guided. In their precarious situation they well illustrate the eternal truth that unless and until a man has found God, he knows neither beginning nor end, and like Sisyphus of old, labors at an ever dreary and hopeless task, in trying to solve the riddle of life.

## ● Coming Issues

The second installment of the series of articles begun by Rev. J. Buenger will treat "Conversion." It will reproduce and discuss some important documents. The next installment of the series of Walther's Theses will include a discussion of Bruxianism. In the series on Socialism and Communism utterances on Religion will be cited from Marxist textbooks. As usual, there will also be other brief items.

\* \* \* \*

This June issue is being sent only to the subscribers.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

\*\*Cp. note on "authoritarianism" and "totalitarianism" in May Confessional Lutheran, p. 32.

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CONFESSIO... THE... LUTHERAN

# THE CONFESSIO... LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--I Cor. 1, 10.

REV. PAUL H. BURGDORF, Editor  
Red Lake Falls, Minnesota  
\*\*\*

REV. ARTHUR E. BECK, Business Manager  
Foley, Minnesota  
\*\*\*

"The Confessional Lutheran" is a venture of faith. While the intention is to publish the periodical monthly, it will regularly go to press only so long as the necessary support warrants this. Subscription: One Dollar per Year. Larger amounts are welcome.

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## • Are We Speaking The Same Thing?

### An A. L. C. Definition of "Ecumenical Lutheranism"

As long ago as in the year 1875 Dr. Walther warned the Missouri Synod along with others that "nowadays, when two speak, write, or preach concerning the same thing, wholly using the same expressions, one is not at all yet sure whether both are not bitter opponents in the same thing."\*

In 1930 Dr. F. Pieper warned us very particularly that the expression "ecumenical Lutheranism" was being used in an improper sense in current union movements among Lutherans. Said he: The term "ecumenical Lutheranism" is being used in the sense of 'broad Lutheranism', and there is being understood by it a Lutheranism which is not as true to Christian doctrine as the Lutheran Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and as the 'Missourians' today."\*\*

It is necessary in this present year of grace, 1940, to sound the warning that the ALC is committed to just such a use of language as that against which Dr. Walther and Dr. Pieper warned so earnestly. In one of its latest official publications, bearing the title, *The Spirit of the American Lutheran Church*, by Prof P. H. Buehring, who is also a member of that church's commission on closer fraternal relations which is dealing with a similar committee of the Missouri Synod (L. B. C., Columbus, Ohio, 1940) there occurs the following passage:—

"While Missouri considered its difficulties with Iowa on questions concerning the Church and the Ministry, Eschatology, Sunday Observance, Confessional Obligation, etc. divisive\*\*\*, Iowa all along insisted that differences on these questions should not interfere with fraternal church-fellowship, and though spurned again and again, it continued to offer the right hand of fellowship to Missouri\*\*\*\* until the great predestinarian

controversy broke out, when Iowa sided definitely with Missouri's opponents. And so on, down through the years, Iowa has always represented a milder, or perhaps we should say a more ECUMENICAL type of Lutheranism than the other German Lutheran synods of the middle west."\*\*\*\*\*

This ALC pronouncement with its incidental definition of "ecumenical Lutheranism" should be borne in mind as often as we are offered statements relative to the subject in hand which emanate within that church-body. Actually this pronouncement—in 1940 A. D.—condemns the Lutheranism which Missouri has always stood for as less ecumenical than that of the old Iowa Synod which is perpetuated in the ALC, and endorses the unorthodox Lutheranism of the old Iowa Synod as more ecumenical than that of the Missouri Synod, among others. In doing so, it uses the identical terminology which we would use in defending the opposite view. For, to quote Dr. Pieper, "by a Lutheranism which should accord-

\**Lehre und Wehre*, XXI, p. 80. Walther was, in the quoted passage, citing Muenkel, who had aptly said with reference to the language of modern theology: "The phraseology of the Church is used in the manner of counterfeiters, a contrary sense actually being laid into it and confusion being worse confounded."

\*\**Conc. Theol. Monthly*, I, p. 2.

\*\*\*This testimony should be compared with the mistaken references to the Missouri fathers found in the Doctrinal Basis adopted at St. Louis in 1938. General proceedings, 1933, pp. 221ff.

\*\*\*\*And the left hand to less orthodox Lutherans, e. g. to those of the General Council—just as the ALC is doing today in courting fellowship with Missouri and with the ULC at one and the same time, on inadequate and incompatible grounds.

\*\*\*\*\*P. 97. It is interesting to compare with this statement a somewhat similar one by the same author with regard to the earliest Lutherans in Ohio: "Their Lutheranism was not strongly confessional, like that of the founders of the Buffalo and the Missouri Synods, but it was of the milder, unionistic type, the outgrowth of Halle pietism." P. 59. (Our emphases.)



ing to the will of God be accorded world-wide acknowledgment and recognition—and which is 'ecumenical' in this sense—we understand that Lutheranism which is guided by Mt. 28, 19ff, where it is said: 'Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you' Etc."\*\*\*\*\* In short, we here have a clear illustration of the undeniable fact that even when the ALC uses our language, it may still be speaking an entirely different thing."\*\*\*\*\*

It is one of the disturbing features in the present union movement that there are, even among Missourians, in positions high and low, those with whom it has become a fixed habit, amounting almost to an obsession, simply to dismiss with the inane charge that we are "too suspicious" anything and everything that we may say when we insist that certain phrases that are being used in current union discussions are being understood in one sense by Missourians and in an opposite sense by the ALC. But the evidence for the truth of our assertions is too obvious, too compelling to be dismissed so naively. We must say, somewhat similarly as Walther had to in his day: we have reason to look behind the language of those with whom we are dealing for something different from what we would ordinarily understand thereby. (Cp. e. g. Beyer, *Milwaukee Colloquy*, p. 76) The case is in fact so clear that it would plainly be a delusion to suppose that mere possible phraseological agreements in official Missouri-ALC declarations should necessarily be regarded as a sufficient basis for union. Thanks to the theological Babel which sophisticated unionists have built, there exists, also within the Lutheran Church, confusion of language by virtue of which the ALC can actually offer us a stone when we have asked for bread. Although we are all for union of a right sort, yes, just because of this fact, we must for the present therefore continue to point to such obstacles; and when we are invited to sup together in Christian fellowship, we must say with all the conviction of which we are capable: "These are spots in your feasts of charity."

Such well-founded protestations as we are making cannot forever continue to be ignored with a lordly, impatient wave of the hand and the idle charge that we are merely "too suspicious" of theological bugaboos which really do not exist behind the phraseology of others, with whom we would, except for them, like with all our hearts to unite.

## • How Much Of Scripture Belongs To The Foundation Of Faith?

At the twenty-third annual convention of the Norwegian Synod, which was held in Minneapolis

\*\*\*\*\*Foreword to *Conc. Theol. Monthly*, Vol. I (1939), p. 2. Dr. Pieper's article should be read in its entirety. It seems a far cry from his clear-cut statements to the discussion of the same subject—ecumenical Lutheranism—in the Foreword to the same journal in 1911.

\*\*\*\*\*We have here adduced merely one example: in proof of this truth. Such examples can be multiplied. It can also be shown that this is true also of statements in the ALC Declaration. Thus, e. g. the statement regarding the Doctrine of Sunday can hardly be understood to mean what we would ordinarily understand it to mean, viz.—that "that which is contained on this point in the Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod is publica doctrina among us" to the exclusion of everything else. Cp. e. g. Golladay, *Thomasius Gospels*, pp. 292ff.

from June 13 to 19, an essay on "The Question of Non-Fundamentals in the Light of Scripture" was read by Dr. S. C. Ylvisaker, President of Bethany College, Mankato, Minnesota, on which the *Lutheran Sentinel*, official organ of the synod in its issue of June 27 reports as follows:

"This question is of burning interest now because of the contention that agreement in so-called non-fundamental or minor doctrines is not necessary for church-fellowship with other Lutherans. The essayist pointed out, however, that not only is Christ Jesus the center of saving faith, but that He is the center of all doctrines revealed in Scripture. The first and simple doctrines that we learn give us eternal life in Jesus; then the many others are added that we may learn to know the Saviour better, and appreciate Him better for what He is; and the others are added also that we may be defended against losing Jesus by being led to follow false Christs. Accordingly, every doctrine of Scripture belongs to the foundation, which is Christ. Refusal to believe any revealed truth of Scripture is a denial of faith in Christ. The distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines pertains only to the individual's knowledge—he may know more or he may know less of revealed truth, but there is no distinction which says that he may at will believe one truth and not another, and still remain a Christian."

This is an excellent statement of a most important issue which we must face today.

## • The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of The Present Union Movement\*

With Special Reference To The Specific Doctrine Involved

By Rev. J. Buenger

(Continued)

### Conversion

On the 29th of April, 1903, a public intersynodical conference was held at Watertown, Wis., at which Dr. F. Pieper read a paper "On the Fundamental Difference in the Doctrine of Conversion and Election." Those who took part in this conference tell us of the deep impression made upon those who were present. Even the opponents could not but perceive the spell which this candid and convincing presentation of the controversial points cast upon the assembly.

With this essay a wholly new era was inaugurated in this controversy. Up to that time the doctrine of the Synodical Conference had been denounced as Calvinistic error in this country and abroad; one and the same objections against it had been raised over and over again; and over against it certain bold assertions of a decidedly un-Lutheran character had been incessantly repeated and defended. But after this the language of the opponents gradually assumed a somewhat different tone. Not all at once, of course. There was still vigorous opposition. A few expressions in Dr. Pieper's paper were especially snatched at and abused. But in spite of efforts on the part of the older champions among the opposition to maintain their bold front, a gradual abating of the fighting spirit and a decided

\*The thanks of the editor are again due Rev. M. Buenger for assistance in preparing the manuscript of the present essay for print.

change within the camp of the opponents was unmistakable from then on.

There is no denying the fact that the earlier presentations of the doctrine of conversion as they were published by Ohio and Iowa in the first decades of the controversy were decidedly synergistic in form and content. Take e. g. the following statements of Dr. F. W. Stellhorn\*\*:

"It is un-Christian and heathenish to say that the actual obtaining of the salvation procured and meant by God for all men depends in no respect on the conduct of man over against the grace of God, but in every respect on God alone." (Luth. Kirchenzeitung, May 15, 1885.)

"If it depends in every respect on God and His grace whether a man is converted and saved, then. . . God's grace and power in the Gospel must work irresistably." (Luth. Kirchenzeitung, 1893, p. 313)

Dr. Stellhorn also made it very plain in what sense, in his opinion, conversion and the actual obtaining of salvation is partly dependent on the conduct of man. He found the decisive factor in the abstaining from wilful resistance or the abandoning of this evil conduct, if it was there. Witness the following:—

"If there is a resistance which makes it impossible for the Holy Spirit to convert man as long as it exists, it must either be abstained from by a man who is to be converted, or else, if it was there it must be abandoned, or otherwise he could not be converted. It is man who resists; he and no one else self-evidently is the one who does not resist if the resistance does not take place. Now the further question arises: when this resistance does not take place and when man is thus converted, whence does this come? Does God simply take away this resistance or does He not permit it to set in, so that the man in whom this occurs can not hinder his conversion and must be converted? If this were the case we should have an irresistible grace of conversion whether it would be called that or not; and that would be Calvinism. However, if this is not the case, then God in conversion must operate on man in such a manner as to enable him to omit this resistance by virtue of just this divine influence, although in spite of it he is still able to exercise it according to his formally free will and his corrupt natural powers. To suppose him to have by nature this strength or faculty to abstain from this resistance would be synergism, but if he is able to abstain from it, and if without this abstaining he cannot be converted, this ability or faculty must be communicated to him by the converting grace, though not yet, as in the converted, as something possessed by, and inherent in, him." (Sprachsaa, I No. 4, pp. 200ff.)

No skill or dialectic adroitness could in the long run hide the fact that the omitting of the wilful resistance at that time was ascribed to the will of natural man, the grace of God furnishing or offering him only the ability to abstain from this evil conduct. But, if at the critical point the determining factor is the will of natural man, then conversion is not the work of God alone without any cooperation of man. Therefore, to ascribe to natural man the decision whether or not he will need not be account-

ed for; it simply need not be there, and in many cases is not there; and wherever the wilful resistance is not found, but merely the natural resistance, that is, that conduct which spontaneously flows from the natural corruption of man, there sooner or later conversion is effected. But, sad to say, in the majority of cases, according to this new theory, men quite unnecessarily increase this natural resistance to the point of a much worse conduct, a wanton and definite rejection of divine grace. This so-called wilful resistance the Holy Ghost is unable to overcome, and this special evil conduct is said to be the only cause of non-conversion and of the final perdition of man.

In this range of ideas any cooperation of man in his conversion, hence any synergism, is really eliminated because the natural resistance is overcome by the Holy Ghost through the Word without any assistance of man who only resists the Holy Ghost, resists naturally until this natural resistance is overcome. On the other hand, wilful resistance is never overcome by the Holy Ghost. As often and as long as this conduct is found in man, the Holy Ghost ceases working in his heart. This does not mean that such a man as has once or repeatedly prevented his conversion can never be converted. For since the wilful resistance is not regarded as a conduct to which man is inclined by nature but as a quite unnecessary evil behavior, it may not be there at another approach of the Holy Spirit, and man may thus be converted.

In this manner the desired two fold object is attained: a different conduct of natural man over against the work of the Holy Ghost without straying into synergism. Even any omitting of the wilful resistance may thus be denied because, according to this theory, there is no such thing as omitting an evil conduct which simply need not be there.

Two things will strike us as we ponder this new way of dealing with an old difficulty. The first is that this doctrine is really worse than the old synergism, because it tampers with the Scriptural doctrine of the original depravity of fallen man. Anticipating the favorite objection that our whole opposition consists in finding insincerity among our opponents, it may be added here that the advocates of this idea probably were not aware of the seriousness of their mistake, but the fact remains that, according to the new theory, man by nature is so bad as to frustrate his conversion. A special wickedness is required in order to effect this result, an additional malice to which man is not inclined by nature. If a man does not offer to the Holy Ghost a resistance worse than that which naturally flows from his evil heart, he is said to be converted as a matter of course. The question, why in some men, in fact in the majority of cases, this wilful resistance arises, cannot be answered satisfactorily by them; it is said to be a psychological mystery, just as inscrutable as the origin of sin in our first parents in whom there was only the possibility to sin, but no inclination to sin.

The second thing which strikes us in this theory is its insidiousness. It is possible, if the un-Scriptural features are not stressed, to present it in language which keeps within the limits of terminology and expressions generally employed in the Lutheran Church. All this is necessary, to cover the hidden rocks, is that the doctrine be set forth in a certain order or schedule which must not be essentially changed. First the complete natural depravity of man must be confessed, out of which flows the natural resistance. At this point no difference is to be

\*\*Ohio's "specialist on predestination and conversion." Dr. P. H. Buehring (ALC), The Spirit of the American Lutheran Church, 1910.

predicated between the conduct of those who are converted and those who remain unconverted; all in like measure offer one and the same resistance to the Holy Ghost. In describing this conduct, the strongest terms may be employed, except that the expression "wilful" must be avoided in this connection. Then it is pointed out that this (natural) resistance of man is overcome by the Holy Ghost alone, without any cooperation of man, who offers resistance and resistance only to the work of God, until he is converted. Then comes the all-important statement: But the grace of God does not work irresistibly. This sentence invariably forms the transition to the other kind of resistance. If man resists wilfully, the Holy Ghost cannot convert him and man is lost entirely by his own fault. This sounds very much like the old Lutheran doctrine and it is therefore not surprising that members of the Synodical Conference have repeatedly been deceived by declarations of this kind, not being able to find the slightest synergism in them. And still this new terminology is nothing but the last attempt at safe-guarding the different conduct of men over against the saving grace of God. And it is our duty to watch, lest this latest and most subtle adulteration of the pure doctrine creep into our church by way of unionistic declarations.

Here a number of testimonies might be adduced to show how the old synergistic mode of teaching was gradually supplanted by this newer form. However, since it is the object of these articles to shed the proper light on the Chicago Theses, and subsequently on the A. L. C. Declaration, it will be more to the point to reproduce the theses on conversion which were presented in May, 1920, at the official intersynodical conference in Chicago as the doctrinal position of the Ohio and Iowa Synods. For it will be seen these theses contain all the essential features of the revised form of doctrine as previously set forth. These theses will be published in our next issue. The corresponding theses of the Synodical Conference will likewise be published. The resultant important Chicago Theses will then be reproduced and their bearing on the present union situation as well as their culmination in the ALC Declaration discussed.

## • Walther's Theses On The Modern Theory Of Open Questions

(Continued)

### Thesis V

**"The Church Militant is indeed to strive after absolute unity of faith and doctrine as its goal; it, however, never attains a higher degree of the same than a fundamental one."**

Two things are said in this thesis. 1) The goal of the Church must always be absolute unity of faith and of doctrine, like unto that of the Church Triumphant; never anything less. 2) It can realize a "fellowship of kindred minds" which is at least fundamentally "like to that above," thanks to the fact that it has been given a "fundament," a foundation which can serve as a perfect organ toward such fellowship, namely the heaven-inspired Scriptures (hence called the "organic" foundation of faith); complete a priori acceptance of which, without any reservation, constitutes a fundamental unity beyond which believers can never hope to come in this present life, because even their sanctified capacity for a knowledge within themselves, though derived from

those Scriptures (their subjective knowledge) will always remain imperfect in this life.

It is this simple fact that over against the realization of absolute perfection on the part of the Church Triumphant, the Church Militant must ever strive after such perfection and yet despair of ever reaching it in this life—it is this fact, simple in itself, but complicated by confused and confusing spirits, that seems so perplexing in the present union movement. Reduced to its simplest terms, this proposition can be rendered thus: true believers, who have been called and sanctified by God's Holy Spirit try to be perfect in life, but they never wholly succeed, either as to their knowledge of truth or as to their conduct, which ever remains imperfect. But at least they never fail to do what mortals can and should do under the circumstances: they cling to the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. As saints of God they know how firm a foundation is laid for their faith in His excellent Word. (Cp. Luther's "The WORD they still shall let remain"—the first principle of the Reformation.) That is their foundation, and their sole foundation, to which they adhere persistently. All who are willing to do this can and will thus at least have fundamental unity,—that is, a unity which is based upon a common "fundament" or foundation, which serves as a unifying organ, according to which, if its full acceptance be agreed to without reservation, any and all offenses and divisions contrary to its doctrine which may arise from time to time will be adjusted and removed. (Cp hymn 113.) Wherever this is not the case fundamental disunity exists.

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### Bruxianism

Before proceeding further with the discussion of this thesis, we should like to call attention to the fact that Dr. Ad. Brux has wholly misunderstood Walther with respect to what is said in this thesis, as do many others today.\* This is so much the case, that in translating the present thesis, in his tract on **Christian Prayer-Fellowship and Unionism**, he actually mistakenly renders Walther's "fundamental unity" with "unity in fundamentals." P. 91; 90. It seems to us that Dr. Brux should himself have sensed his error. For he himself adduces a passage from Walther in which the latter says: "As soon as there reveals itself in an individual person or in a church-body the readiness of mind to submit unconditionally to the entire Word of God and to hold nothing that militates against the foundation of the Christian faith—be it the real foundation (Christ) or the dogmatic foundation (doctrine of justification through faith), or the organic foundation (the Scriptures)—we gladly extend to every such a person the hand of fraternal fellowship, and also are cordially willing and ready to have church-fellowship with such a church-body." (Emphases are ours.)

For the sake of those who are not conversant with the German, it may be stated that the word for (the organic Scriptural) foundation in this language is "fundament"; hence fundamental unity has the sense of unity on the basis of acceptance of the entire Scriptures in the usage of Walther and all older Lutheran dogmaticians, and not merely of acceptance of that portion of Scripture which is called the "fundamentals" (the dogmatic foundation) in distinction from "non-fundamentals", as Dr. Brux and others mistakenly suppose. It is largely on this basic confusion that Dr. Brux's wrong position and

\*E. g., Dr. M. Rev. Cp. In the Interest of Lutheran Unity, 1910, p. 33.

that of others rests. (We have already stated that the position advocated by Dr. Brux and others is really the position of the Fundamentalist wing of Modernism. That is why Dr. Walther spoke of the Modern theory of "open questions.")

On pages 91 and 92 of his tract Dr. Brux cites three further passages from Dr. Walther, each of which should have revealed his underlying error to him. Instead, his own confusion causes him to regard the wholly consistent position of Dr. Walther and of our Synod, which so remarkably demonstrated its practicability as a unifying principle in the past, as inconsistent. It vitiates his whole discussion of Walther's position, making it quite valueless and entirely misleading.

Because he approaches the Scriptures in the same subjective way, a similar thing is true of his entire tract.

It is on similar misconceptions that Dr. Brux's unfortunate confusion regarding "perfectionism" in particular rests, pp. 55-58. (On p. 58 he again mistakenly renders Walther's "fundamental unity" with a mere "unity in fundamentals.") To accept the Scriptures in their entirety as a matter of principle (the Scriptural principle) in keeping with Christ's express injunction will by no means spell perfection for a sinful mortal either as to doctrine or as to conduct. But it does give him a firm and infallible foundation on which to stand, and its unconditional acceptance by himself and others constitutes fundamental unity, that is to say, a unity by virtue of agreement in any case to let the Scriptures alone decide all matters of faith and life, especially also when imperfections as to doctrine or conduct still manifest themselves, as they always will. That is the most that can be achieved, and the least that can be asked in life. If a Church or an individual asks for less, begging license to depart in any one point of doctrine, as the ALC has done with respect to a number of things in its Declaration; then fundamental unity does not exist, because this is done contrary to the Christian "fundament," the Scriptural foundation. Fellowship cannot be established by declaring such a departure "non-divisive," no matter how "non-fundamental" it may be. For a Church to do so (as Missouri has unfortunately consented to do) makes it a party to such error. It unites it with others in an agreement in fundamental disunity.

As for a proper discussion of perfectionism, all that is necessary to be said has been said in Dr. P. Pieper's Dogmatics, Vol III, pp. 36-44.

To say that the Church Militant never attains a higher degree of unity than a fundamental one, does not, as the word is here used, mean that it is only necessary or possible to agree in so-called fundamental doctrines, while non-fundamental doctrines may be declared non-divisive. It rests on a grave misunderstanding, and can only cause confusion, to introduce into the question of what a Church or an individual should confess, the question of a distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines—a distinction which may serve a good purpose in its proper place. If that distinction is wrongly introduced here by others, we call attention to the fact that the doctrine of the Word of God (its authority and clarity) itself belongs to the "fundamentals". Whoever therefore is willing to make light of a "non-fundamental" doctrine, knowing that in doing so he is out of line with Scripture,

commits the fundamental error of violating the majesty of God's Word.\*\*

But we shall let Walther himself speak on this thesis.

(To be Continued)

## \* Forget The Fathers?

There is a spirit of indifference to a sound doctrinal basis for all of the Church's preaching and practice today which bodes ill for the coming generation. When Lutheran pastors exclaim (as I heard but recently): "Let us forget the fathers and get back to Scripture," it makes me wonder just how long our church will remain truly Lutheran.

Now, it may sound very pious to make such an assertion. But just how pious is it? First of all, it isn't in accord with that Scripture to which the unionist appeals. For what does Scripture have to say on this very score? It bids us: "**Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.**" Heb. 13, 7.

It is true, we must never place our trust in mere man. Upon those who do that God has pronounced His curse, Jer. 17, 5. But we are not putting our trust in man when we remember with grateful respect the saints of God who so preached unto us that "more sure word of prophecy," that our Saviour's words may of a truth be applied to them: "He that heareth you heareth me." Luke 10, 16. If any of our fathers have taught that which is not in harmony with the verbally inspired Word, then we will humbly acknowledge the error and not continue proclaiming that same error.

But in that term "fathers," as used by the unionistically inclined spirits of our day, must also be included the men who formulated our precious Lutheran Confessions. And as a result we find men who have pledged themselves to teach in accordance with those Confessions, not "**in as far as they are consistent**" with the Scriptures, but "**because they have been derived from God's Word,**" emptying themselves of the following: "It may seem heresy for any one to question any part of the Augsburg Confession, but we make bold to assert that the time may not be far distant when the Lutheran Church will find it necessary to re-examine this part (Art. XVI, Of Civil Affairs) of its Confession in the light of the Word of God. Luther and the Reformers were undoubtedly influenced to a large extent in their ideas of the relationship between Church and State by the traditional Roman Catholic doctrine."—"The American Lutheran," May, 1940, page 13.

Either the so-called Lutheran pastor who wrote that bit of rank heresy (for it not only "**may seem heresy,**" but is plain heresy) had not sufficiently acquainted himself with the Confessions to which he pledged himself when he took his oath of office to know whether or not they really were "**derived from God's Word,**" or else he has now gotten some new revelation of which he has not told us.

\*\*We have indicated that it will be best not to muddle the real issue in question by a discussion of the true purpose of a distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals. If there is a legitimate reason for doing this, however, and one is not wholly sure of his ground, then a careful study of what Walther has said in *Lehre u. Wehre*, XIV, pp. 101-114 (C. T. M., Apr., 1939, pp. 255-260; May 351-357) can well serve the purpose of eliminating confusion and doubt.

The strange inconsistency of which the Lutheran Church is guilty, so far as its attitude toward war is concerned, according to this modern Lutheran, "May all be traced back to the same source, namely, the belief that there is such a thing as a 'just' war." Well, instead of finding fault with the fathers who believed and taught this truth, it might be well for him to check up on some of his own theology. He might discover that he is become rather tangled up in an inconsistency of his own devising. For if there be no such a thing as a just war, then we shall not only have to re-examine the Augsburg Confession, but we shall also have to re-examine the justice of a God who decreed that a certain war should be waged, and in no uncertain terms rebuked the disobedient king who did not wage it to the bitter end. 1 Sam. 15, 23.

Forget the fathers? It is, of course, absolutely necessary that this be done if certain unhallowed unions are to be effected. But if we as a church are concerned about the preservation of the truth, we had better pause before we begin the process of forgetting. If we are to find rest for our souls, we may still have to "stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." Jer. 6, 16.

Rev. Norman A. Madson in *Lutheran Sentinel* (Norwegian Synod).

## • In The Interest Of Fairness and Truth

With reference to an article in the May issue of *The Confessional Lutheran*, "Lutheran Union," the following letter, from which the article quoted, is here printed in full in the interest of fairness and truth:

Rev. Paul H. Burgdorf, Red Lake Falls, Minn  
Dear Friend and Brother:

I thank you for sending me No. 3 of the *Confessional Lutheran*. While I cannot agree with its attitude on the union question, I hope that it will always remain on the high plane of polemics on which you are conducting it—if there must be polemics, which I very much regret.

I was also glad to print your letter in this week's *Lutheran Witness* as evidence that we bear you no ill-will for your opposition to the present union documents and also that you have no personal feeling against those with whom you differ. Your letter is evidence of all this and I think it is proof of your sincerity and good fellowship.

Of course, I wish there could be harmony in our own midst on the union question. As far as I am concerned, I see such practical difficulties—especially to the scandal of opposition altars in the mission fields and also the connection of the A. L. C. with other Lutheran bodies in projects that distinctly involve not externals only—I suppose there will be no fellowship in my life-time. On the other hand, I am of the sincere conviction that the differences in doctrine have ceased, in some cases decades ago. And much of this was due to the fine work our Minnesota clergy did back in 1916 and later in their discussions with the Ohio and Iowa Synod clergy. In my opinion, both contentions are valid—the old controversies have been settled in a God-pleasing way, not by our union committee of 1935-1938, but by private and official conferences extending over more than twenty-five years.

I am not asking you to take this viewpoint although you are evidently far from any fanaticism

such as I regret to see in some Norwegian Synod and Wisconsin Synod publications. We have pleaded for personal meetings with these opponents but they have refused.

Keep your paper free from smearing the reputations of men high or low and your work will be a blessing. In all the controversies of the past our Missouri Synod writers from Walther down, never placed under suspicion the sincerity of their opponents.

Let me tell you about a recent incident. One of our Norwegian brethren offered to another magazine an article which charged the American Lutheran Church with seeking recognition for the open question doctrine. This was bad enough since demonstrably the Iowa Synod dropped this doctrine in 1867. What was worse was the insinuations against the opponent, a member of the Missouri Synod, as if he himself had apostasized from the faith and was endeavoring to betray his church into false teachings. When the offer was made to print this article minus the personalities, the author withdrew it, thus proving that what he really had in mind was not the historical argument, but the "smearing".

You will forgive an old hand at polemics to suggest in all friendliness and sincerity that you do not print personal attacks, no matter how good the argument of such an article may be, but that you insist on exclusion of personal references and insinuations. You know and I know that the kingdom of God cannot be built that way. We may have an intense doctrinal discussion in our own midst, and that will do no harm. But printing personalities, especially when they involve men who have these many years shown their willingness to testify to the truth at all costs,—the harm for the present may not be so great but we have then lowered our standards and it may not be so long before we shall have the horrible type of polemics which is festering in the Wisconsin Synod through its "Protestant" controversy for the last fifteen years. I have tried to give a good example in my American Lutheran articles, at least in this respect that I have not mentioned any of the Norwegian and Wisconsin Synod critics by name and have not by one word suggested that in our Synod we have had a criticism of the union articles which had not always been fair. If we must differ, let us suppress all personalities, all mention of names. As for a debate dealing with the merits of the case, I have publicly stated in the *Lutheran Witness* that I am thoroughly in favor of free speech. However, free speech is one thing and defaming brethren in our own Synodical body is quite another thing.

Finally let me say that the staff of the *Lutheran Witness* may have something to say about the union articles. I, for one, am not for endorsement in 1941 of the three documents in their present form.

Yours with fraternal regards, Theodore Graebner

## • Is Marxist Socialism Against Religion?

### A Prefatory Statement

Before beginning the present discussion, it may be well to state that when we speak of religion we hold no brief for any and all religion. For we well know that also when it rises above mere naturalism, much of it is false and even harmful. In that case we are interested in it chiefly inasmuch as it is demonstrably a corruption of true religion hence a testimony to the same. Our real interest lies in revealed religion as it is contained in the Holy

Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as it has been represented by historic Christianity through the ages.

With this out of the way, it will be interesting to hear what Marxism has to say about religion in our day.

\* \* \* \*

## A Communist Explanation Of The Origin Of Religion

Under the heading "Is Religion Innate?", Yaroslavsky discusses this question and gives the following explanation of the existence of religion:—

"The priests would have us believe that religion was born simultaneously with the appearance of the first man on earth. But science has proved that religion made its appearance in human society at a considerably later date.

"If a person is brought up from the day of his birth," he goes on to say, "in a way that precludes all contact with believers; if at the very outset he is taught the proper conception of the universe, and, when his mind is still in its plastic formative and most receptive state, all the phenomena of nature and of society are correctly explained to him; and if he is so circumstanced that he will not be socially oppressed by the classes that utilize religion to strengthen their power, he will not need any kind of religion whatsoever."

Says Yaroslavsky further: "Religion appeared at a time when man, still completely in the grip of nature's elemental powers, could not explain to himself natural things, such things as change of weather, change of seasons, storms, thunder, floods, hail, war, pestilences, cholera, etc. Primitive man ascribed all these to the intervention of some supernatural power. Religion appeared when man first tried to find the why and wherefore, a 'reason' for such phenomena of life as death, dreams, epileptic fits, etc. Religion arose from the respect accorded to dead ancestors, to deceased parents, and to the eldest of the clan; religion arose, on the one hand, from the abject dread in which our prehistoric fathers stood of the ever-threatening, incomprehensible phenomena of nature, and on the other, from the social oppression he experienced. In capitalist, class society, religion has entrenched itself so firmly precisely because the toilers are socially oppressed, and in the majority of cases the exploiters utilize the helplessness of the masses to gain the upper hand over them in the name of god."

He finds it necessary to add the footnote: "A number of comrades have pointed out to me that I have given different reasons for the origin of religion. That is true. But that was really how it was. The roots and the content of religion were different at different times."—**Religion in the U. S. S. R.**, p. 32.

Thus Marxism speaks with the cocksureness of all materialism and specifically of modern evolutionistic "science," without so much as attempting to offer any real proof for its radical and bold assertions. Over against its conception of things, we are however still convinced that man is incurably religious, by the universal historical evidence that when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves: which show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts

the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." (Romans 2, 14ff.) We agree with the peasant whom a Red Republican of 1793 told: "We are going to pull down your churches and your steeples—all that recalls past ages and that brings to your mind what these things stand for." "Citizen," replied the good peasant, "then pull down the stars."

\* \* \* \*

## Communism's Estimate Of Religion In General

Marx has boiled Communistic philosophy down to a single capsule of venom in the well-known slogan: "Religion is the opium of the people." This aphorism, which was employed by Marx in his criticism of Hegel's **Philosophy of Law**, was, after the "October Revolution" of 1917 in Russia, engraved on the walls of the former City Hall in Moscow, opposite the famous and much visited shrine of the Iberian Virgin Mother so that all might see it. The shrine has since been removed. (Cp. Lenin, **Religion**, p. 7.) Lest the significance of this sententious dictum of the oracle of Communism be lost sight of, Lenin, foremost echo of this oracle, has seen fit to comment: "Marx said 'Religion is the opium of the people'—and this postulate is the cornerstone of the whole philosophy of Marxism with regard to religion." (**Religion**, p. 12.) It is this slogan which in Communistic literature echoes forth again and again like an internal refrain. In plain words, Marx has said: "We make war against all prevailing ideas of religion." (**Luth. Witness**, 54, 3, p. 43.)

Speaking for himself, Lenin has similarly said: "Religion is a kind of spiritual intoxicant, in which the slaves of capital drown their humanity and their desires for some sort of decent human existence." **Religion**, p. 7.

Taking a cue from his protagonist Comrades, Yaroslavsky has said: "The conception of the world from the religious viewpoint is incorrect; it is a mutilated understanding of the world and of the mutual relationship of men. A person cannot act correctly, cannot act in an organized manner as a Communist, as a Leninist, if his brain is poisoned by religion." Or again: "Religion acts as a bandage over the eyes of man, preventing him from seeing the world as it is. It is our task to tear off this bandage and to teach the masses of workers and peasants to see things correctly, to understand what does exist and what does not, so as to be able to rebuild this world to fit the needs of workers and peasants." **Religion in the U. S. S. R.**, p. 31. Or, to cite this present leader of the Militant Society of the Godless once more, he says: "Every Leninist, every Communist, every class-conscious worker and peasant must be able to explain why a Communist cannot support religion; why Communists fight against religion; and every Communist must be able to answer the questions put to him by his fellow workers on this subject." (Cp. cit. p. 61.) In discussing the question "What are the tasks and duties of the League of Militant Atheists?" he says, among a great many other things: "In our work among religious people we must bear in mind Lenin's advice to utilize every method available to us, or, as he said, we must 'approach them this way and that way' in order to stimulate them to criticise religion among themselves." (P. 61.)

In his discussion with a group of students of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, on the question of Religion and Communism of Feb. 15, 1935, one would naturally have expected Earl Browder to be rather wary. Yet, here is the manner in which this matter was summarily disposed of at that time:—

Question: "Suppose that the members of this group go out into the various churches that they will serve and that they, together with the people in their congregations, would become revolutionized and would feel that they were being animated by religious motives, would the Communist Party examine that evidence and give it scientific weight, and possibly modify its conviction that religion cannot be a revolutionary force?"

Browder's answer: "I would not want to hold out any hopes that the Communists will be converted to religion. For us as Communists the question is answered and, while we always examine all evidence that is brought forward scientifically, we have no reason in our experience to believe that any future evidence will modify our conclusions. We would not want to give the slightest indication that there is any prospect of a rapprochement between communism and religion as such."

Question: "Are you sure there will never be any evidence?"

Browder's answer: "While we always examine every bit of evidence that comes forward, we consider the question as settled for us. We do not expect to have to reopen it."

Communism in the United States, Second Printing, 1935, p. 337.

\* \* \* \*

## Communism's Evaluation Of Different Kinds Of Religion

Discussing the question of different kinds of religion in particular—the Greek Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, the Anglican, the Baptists, and others are mentioned by name—Yaroslavsky says: "As to differences between one religion and another, they are of little, if any, consequence. Lenin, writing to Gorky\*, sees no greater difference between one and the other than between a blue devil and a green one." *Religion in the U. S. S. R.*, p. 53.

Earl Browder adds his voice to the anti-religious chorus, saying: "We Communists do not distinguish between good and bad religions, because we think they are all bad for the masses." *What Is Communism*, p. 194.

Similarly, Dimitrov, the Bulgarian Communist and General Secretary of the Communist International, says, in the preface to a propaganda pamphlet distributed in preparation for the 1937 World Conference of the Godless at Moscow: "There is no difference among religions for the class-conscious proletariat. Every religion, and especially the Christian religion, is a bad enemy of Communism, and must be destroyed." He adds: "It is not enough in the fight against religion to give illuminating talks or write books. Weapons must be used against religion also; for the Church is preparing to renew its fight against the Soviet power and also world Communism. It is sometimes charged that we have destroyed the churches and monasteries, but such charges dare not effect a Communist. It is not a question of a few destroyed churches if the world is to be made Communistic. On the ruins of the old world, Communism will build true Socialism." *Cp. Religious Digest*, Jan., 1937, p. 77.)

\*Together with Lunacharsky, Maxim Gorky, outstanding revolutionist writer, and like the former a close friend of Lenin, for a while, after the defeat of the 1905 revolution in Russia, led an attempted revival of an emotional variety of Socialism, with a religious tendency. (*Cp. Lenin, Religion*, p. 5.)

## The Great Socialistic Hope—The Triumph Of Fertilizer Over Religious Influence

How does Communism hope to "free" the masses from the "bane" of religious influence? Yaroslavsky supplies the answer.

With particular respect to present-day Soviet Russia, he says: "More and more we find the peasants adopting the new technique and freeing themselves from and subduing the dominion of the elemental forces of nature. These victories over nature, over these elemental forces, are of paramount importance in the work of freeing the great peasant masses from the stupefying influence of religion. In a few more years the masses of peasants organized in the collective and state farms will, with the use of the mighty technique of the proletarian state and with the help of the mighty fertilizers at work upon new and hitherto untilled fields, be able to free themselves from the last remnants of the influence of religion which the exploiters had almost indelibly imprinted on their minds in the course of centuries." *Religion in the U. S. S. R.*, p. 6.

\* \* \* \*

Thus Marxism is hopelessly pessimistic as regards religion—as well as all else that it opposes—on the one hand, but just as optimistic and idealistically utopian as regards the prospect of its own achievements on the other hand.

Over against this, true religion is realistic. It recognizes the fact that it has its existence in an imperfect and sinful world; but it also has a message of redeeming and transforming grace. And so it keeps the faces of its adherents trustfully and hopefully turned to the skies, while their feet are firmly implanted upon the ground.

## • For The Record

In this department of its May issue, this journal gave space among other things to a report of a New York newspaper according to which Rev. Walter E. Schwolert was to take part in an inter-faith meeting in which Catholic, Protestants, and Jews cooperated. (P. 33.) We have since learned that the brother whom we have named actually refused to participate in the said meeting. The editor of *The Confessional Lutheran* was at fault in not asking Pastor Schwolert whether the newspaper report was reliable before giving space to it in these columns. We therefore apologize and gladly give space to this correction.

## • Coming Issues

Indispensable documents will be included in coming installments of the series on the Dogmatic-Historical Background of the Present Union Movement by Rev. J. Buenger. This material should be in the hands of everyone who is at all interested in this movement. A review of some of the mistaken references to our synodical fathers in the Doctrinal Basis of 1938 by Rev. D. L. Pfeiffer is in the offing. The next installment on Socialism and Communism will discuss the Marxist View regarding Christianity in particular.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

Sample copies of this issue are sent to the pastors of the Minn. Dist.



# THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--1 Cor. 1, 10.

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August, 1940

No. 8

IN THIS ISSUE: One Joint Document?—Missouri's Great Martyr—Some Historical Errors Of The Union Article\* Adopted By The Missouri Synod In 1938—A Voice From Northern Illinois—A Correction For The C. T. M.—Walther's Theses On The Modern Theory Of Open Questions—The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of The Present Union Movement—For The Record—At The Cross-Roads—The Marxist View Of Christianity.

## ❁ One Joint Document

Time and again we hear of a plan to have the desired union between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church based on one document instead of three. It is true that a union on the basis of three documents which by no means are in perfect agreement but are very much in need of being harmonized with each other, is a union without real unity. But are those who are in favor of one document aware of the difficulties in the present situation? Such a document as that which is contemplated can very easily be drawn up where there is real unity. But where this is lacking it is a hopeless task unless the two parties concerned are very careful to keep on common ground and to straddle differences. This would be unionism.

Here are a few of the difficulties:

1. The Synodical Conference declares the assumption of mistakes in the Scriptures (even in "minor" matters) an error which is divisive of church-fellowship. The A. L. C. does not. Their Declaration avoids this difference, and the various intersynodical pastoral conferences do not seem to have touched upon this point. Will the one document contain an antithesis in which this difference is definitely settled?

2. The Synodical Conference has always firmly insisted on the equal guilt of those who are converted and those who are lost. The A. L. C. on the contrary, although no longer terming our position false doctrine, with the same determination claims the right to assume two different kinds of resistance, one that is overcome and one that cannot be overcome by the Holy Ghost, hence an unequal guilt. The Chicago Theses and the A. L. C. Declaration avoid this special difference. Will the new document also avoid it?

3. The "psychological mystery" which inevitably results from the aforementioned suppositious unequal guilt has always been rejected by the Synodi-

cal Conference as a false doctrine. Will the one document take a clear stand regarding this difference or will it leave it in the dark?

4. As to the doctrine of the Church the A. L. C. will be perfectly satisfied if in the definition of the Church the means of grace are mentioned, because thereby they see their false doctrine of a visible side of the Church safeguarded. Will the new document offer us such a definition in order to satisfy both sides?

5. Will the question whether the keys are originally given to "the Church in its totality" or to all Christians as such and to every one of them be answered in the new document?

6. Will the one document show whether or not Gerhard's error concerning Sunday still has equal rights in the A. L. C. with their "doctrina publica"?

7. Will the one document contain a correct definition of open questions and determine their sphere as to the Antichrist, certain chillastic notions, and other controverted points?

8. Will it make a clear statement of objective justification?

And last but not least, will it again be a last-minute document, leaving little or no time for pastors and congregations to examine it and eventually to voice objections before the convention?

J. B.

## ❁ Missouri's Great Martyr

One of the most striking things about the discussions which are currently being carried on in the interest of Lutheran union is the abuse to which Dr. Walther, as he lives on in his great published utterances, has been subjected. We are ready to believe with all our hearts that such abuse is due to a failure to understand Walther's position, rather than to wilful misrepresentation. However, that does not materially alter the situation or lessen the

confusion amid which the present union discussions are being too largely conducted.

The Confessional Lutheran has repeatedly called attention to public misrepresentations of our great Missourian leader.\* We are being made to witness the conjuring up of a Walther whose appearance fills one with alarm. The most recent, and perhaps most amazing, example of this occurs in the brochure by Dr. M. Reu, *In the Interest of Lutheran Unity*, an official publication of the American Lutheran Church. (Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, Ohio, 1940.)

Discussing a thesis—wholly unacceptable to us—which he champions throughout this tract, Dr. Reu speaks of “the kind of doctrines on which we must be agreed, namely, the articles of fundamental importance, and certainly not those of non-fundamental importance.” He then mistakenly cites Dr. Walther as being in agreement with his own position. Says he: “It should also be pointed out that Dr. Walther himself—e. g., in the article, ‘The False Supports of the Modern Theory of Open Questions,’ written in 1868—has restated the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental articles, and he did so in discussing this very question, on what grounds one is compelled to terminate fellowship with another person or church-body. Here we read:

“The Church has never achieved a higher degree of doctrinal unity than a **unity in the fundamental articles**; only a misguided chiliast could hope that the Church might ever attain to a higher degree of unity.” (Our emphasis.)

Now, we have all respect for scholarship. And we have respect for Dr. Reu's scholarship, but this is not scholarship. Dr. Walther never said what is being attributed to him here. He is being misquoted and abused. However unintentional and well-meant this may be, it is being done nevertheless.

The passage which Dr. Reu means to quote is found in the Foreword to Volume XIV of *Lehre und Wehre* (1868), p. 66\*\*. Correctly translated, it would read: “The Church has never achieved a higher degree of doctrinal unity than a **fundamental one**; etc.” (Our emphasis) We have pointed out before\*\*\*—Something which every Lutheran scholar should know—that whenever Dr. Walther spoke of fundamental unity he invariably meant unity in the sense of acceptance of the organic “fundament” or foundation of faith, that is the Holy Scriptures, in all of its parts, even to its last minutiae. The Bible with its every jot and tittle was to him, and rightly, the unifying organ of faith in Christendom. He spoke of the fundamental unity of the Church Militant on the basis of it only in contrast to the absolute unity of the perfected saints in the Church Triumphant. These need no such organic “fundament”, no reveal-

\*Cp. e. g. Vol. I, No. 4, p. 19ff; No. 7, p. 46.

\*\*Not, strictly, in the essay itself to which Dr. Reu assigns it. However, the Foreword in question is introductory to Walther's great essay and should therefore be considered a part of it. It is for this reason that we have previously criticized the *Concordia Theological Monthly* for not including this most important Foreword in its translation of the essay.

While speaking of scholarship, it may be pointed out that it does not seem very scholarly not to give the exact reference for such an important quotation as this. But much less is it scholarly to take one or two scattered excerpts out of their context and to use them in the manner in which this is done in *In the Interest of Lutheran Unity*. As a result there irresistibly forces itself upon one a sentiment similar to that to which Walther gave expression regarding the citation of Luther and other fathers by Iowa colloquists in 1867: “They seem only to have rummaged through Luther and other ancients with a tendency to find substantiation for their doctrine of ‘Open Questions’ therein.” (Walther's *Briefe*, II, p. 119ff.)

\*\*\*Vol. I, No. 7, p. 46.

ing Word, because they see God face to face in His unveiled majesty and are therefore united in a blissful knowledge which is necessarily perfect and hence identical in every case, in other words, in absolute agreement. Walther never spoke of a fundamental unity in the sense of a mere unity in fundamental articles as opposed to a unity in non-fundamentals which is supposedly not necessary or possible in Christendom.

Walther, moreover, made his position so clear that one should suppose it would be well nigh impossible for him to be misunderstood by anyone who has but taken the trouble to read his excellent exposition of his position at all carefully. Even a second citation which Dr. Reu himself adduces, is sufficient to show that he has not rendered Walther correctly\*\*\*\* It reads (and we have emphasized pertinent portions of it only to make clear its intended sense):

“Far be it from us to hope that brotherly fellowship with an individual or church fellowship with a church-body should terminate, if they are not quite correct dogmatically in their Christian knowledge. . . As soon as an individual or a church-body manifests the willingness to submit unconditionally to the entire Word of God and to retain nothing that militates against the foundation of the Christian faith—be it the real foundation, Christ, or the dogmatical foundation, the doctrine of justification by faith, or the organic foundation, the Scriptures—\*\*\*\*\*we will gladly extend to such an individual the hand of fraternal fellowship, and are willing and ready, from the heart, to establish church fellowship with such a body.”

Dr. Reu should have cited what follows immediately after this quotation! Or one should read in its entirety the section from which the first quotation is taken! Then such mistakes as that which we unfortunately must point out and warn against here would, as it seems to us, almost be impossible. How sorely Walther has in fact been misrepresented appears from the fact that in his discussion of The False Arguments for the Modern Theory of Open Questions, the refutation of the arguments revolving about the second false prop of this theory is actually introduced with the words: “Others make the appeal that the Church admittedly enjoys only a fundamental unity, not an absolute one, in this life.” In a discussion running through thirteen and a half pages Walther then sets the reader so painstakingly right with every question involved under the discussion of this head as to leave nothing to be desired. (L. u. W., XIV, pp. 101-114; C. T. M. X, p. 255ff.)

From what has been said, one fact must stand out boldly in this discussion: The Controversy on Open Questions between the Synodical Conference and the A. L. C. is as live and as wide open an issue today as it was e. g. in 1867 when the Milwaukee Colloquy was held between representatives of the Missouri and Iowa Synods. And yet there are among the present leaders of Missouri\*\*\*\*\* those

\*\*\*\*P. 33. The citation is taken from *Lehre u. Wehre*, XIV, p. 111. It is found in the English translation of Walther's essay in C. T. M., X, p. 353ff.

\*\*\*\*\*This does not mean merely the Scriptures “in their totality.” In the usage of Walther it means, as stated above, the Scriptures to their last jot and tittle.

\*\*\*\*\*Cp. “Walther's Theses, Etc.” in this issue.

\*\*\*\*\*We do not mean to judge intentions. We are convinced that it is time to forget intentions and to face facts. In any other case there may be danger that we, too anxiously concerned about the honor of our persons, neglect to uphold the honor of God's Word, and that as a result our Church may meanwhile be engulfed in a wrong union.

who, instead of charitably endeavoring to convince the A. L. C. that it is still very much in need of light, would, as it seems, rather exhaust their efforts towards union in an attempt to convince some of us that this is not at all the case—that the Controversy on Open Questions has long ago ceased. God forgive them; for they know not whereof they speak! As we endeavor to correct mistaken testimony and false impressions along these lines, let us, true to the Eighth Commandment, be diligent also to defend Walther against mistaken references and misrepresentations which are being associated with his name today.

We should be worthy apologists of Missouri's great martyr, so that, though he be dead, he may yet speak.\*\*\*\*\*

## ● Some Historical Errors Of The Union Articles Adopted By The Missouri Synod In 1938

Rev. D. L. Pfeiffer

We do not now refer to the doctrinal errors of the 1938 union documents, which are intolerable. We are thinking of their historical errors. For example, our Synodical fathers are misrepresented.\* These are minor errors, these historical errors. Nevertheless, they are serious enough, not only because they are errors, but also because the testimony of our fathers is treasured by us.\*\*

1. The Declaration states: "With reference to the question concerning the conversion of Israel, which some find indicated especially in Rom. 11, 25, 26, we declare with Dr Walther that to assume such a conversion 'must not be regarded as a cause for division' (Milwaukee Kolloquium, p. 156)." Thus the Declaration supposedly quotes Dr. Walther directly. However, Dr. Walther actually said, "Had he (a certain former Missourian\*\*\*) only not been able to agree with us in the doctrine of the conversion of the Jews, we would not have regarded that as a cause for severing relations with him." From this it is clear that the Declaration garbles Dr. Walther's words. He was not speaking of confirmed errorists, but of an erring brother. And he did not say that the aforesaid assumption **must** not be regarded as a cause for division. He did speak thus generally; for he did not intend to tolerate an error, as the A. L. C. has done these many years.

Committee 16's citation of the fathers at this point does not prove that "the synodical fathers have declared that such deviation in this doctrine concerning the conversion of Israel need not be regarded as a cause for division." The Committee cites *Lehre und Wehre*, XIV, p. 252, this bringing us to the end of an article entitled: "Beitraege zur Beurteilung der Frage von der Intercession der Seligen

\*\*\*\*\*The Confessional Lutheran intends to discuss the brochure *In the Interest of Lutheran Union* further. The publication of this brochure as an explanation of what happened when Missouri accepted the A. L. C.'s proposals in the 1938 Union Articles at St. Louis makes rescission of those articles more imperative than ever.

\*We want it understood that we are not judging motives. We are speaking of errors, not of the men who made them.

\*\*Cp. e. g. Hebr. 13, 7.—Editor.

\*\*\*Pastor G. Schieferdecker.—Editor.

fuer die streitende Kirche auf Erden." There we read: "Besides, I place this assumption regarding the intercession of the blessed into the category of those 'queer notions,' such as that of a still-to-be-hoped-for great conversion of the Jews (which has an even greater **semblance** of Scriptural proof than the aforesaid assumption), etc.; and it will harm no one who does not draw conclusions from it. Whoever testifies and teaches, as the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, Chemnitz, Carpzov, and the Wirttemberg Confession do, regarding Christ's Office, Justification, and the Means of Grace, may cling to this 'dream', he is for that matter still a Christian and a Lutheran."\*\*\*\*\* This is all that the cited article says about the conversion of Israel. We question the wisdom of quoting a passing remark to infer from it a man's position, unless his words be divinely inspired. Aside from that, however, the fact that one may call someone a Christian and a Lutheran does not prove that he would fellowship with him. The fathers distinguished between Lutherans and "Lutherans." Witness: "We do not deny even the Lutheranism of these two synods [Ohio and Iowa] in every sense." (*Lehra und Wehre*, LI, 97.) The Committee's citation does not prove what it is supposed to prove.

2. In regard to the false assumption of a physical resurrection of the martyrs before the Judgment Day, Committee 16 states: "Your Committee finds that the Synodical fathers have declared that this erroneous assumption need not be divisive of church-fellowship. (*Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 18, 1872, p. 74ff.)" Here the Committee cites an article which proves exactly the opposite of what it is supposed to prove. The article first shows that the position of Luther and of Selnecker in regard to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day are entirely different from the position of the Chiliasts. And then the article states, for example: "But when Chiliasts affirm a solemn, special resurrection of all believers or of all martyrs and confessors as occurring a thousand years before Christ's coming for judgement, they do not thereby let the rule stand, making only an exception to it [as in the case of Luther and Selnecker], but they thereby completely overthrow the rule itself, that is, the article of the general resurrection of the good and evil on the Last Day. Hence, also, the doctrine that a special physical resurrection precedes the so-called millennial kingdom, has ever been regarded in our church as a mark of gross and damnable Chiliasm."

In reading this passage, one must not wrongly emphasize the word "Chiliasts" at the beginning of the passage so as merely to imply that if anyone is not a Chiliast otherwise, he could assume a special resurrection of the martyrs before the Last Day without overthrowing the article of the general resurrection of all the dead on the Last Day. Neither should one confuse the issue by asserting that those who teach a double resurrection do not "assume a rule of the martyrs here on earth but hold that they go directly to heaven and rule there with Christ." For whether the false assumption of a two-fold resurrection of the dead be connected with other Chiliastic notions, or not, it overthrows the article of the general resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. According to this false assumption of a two-fold resurrection no Christian could be certain that he is to be resurrected on the Last Day, in direct contradiction with John 6: 39, 40, 44, 54. For no Christian knows beforehand whether or not he will die as a martyr. Indeed, that false assumption alone makes one a Chiliast. The fathers regarded it as

\*\*\*\*The writer of the L. u. W. article does not say that such a one is an orthodox Christian and Lutheran.—Editor.

crass Chiliasm and church-divisive.\*\*\*\*\*

3. In regard to the A. L. C.'s "open question" on the identity of Antichrist. Committee 16 states: "Your Committee finds that the synodical fathers have declared that a deviation in this doctrine need not be divisive of church-fellowship. (*Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 19, 1873, p. 290; *Lehre und Wehre*, Vol. 25, 1879, p. 35ff.)" The first of the two articles cited by the Committee is the more important, and is quoted in the second article, which speaks mainly of two cases in which fellowship-relations were severed with some people who had denied that the papacy is the Antichrist, and upholds the decisions in both cases. The pertinent words in the first article are the following: "Therefore, although we are of the opinion that the Church's obligation to the Symbols includes also the non-fundamental doctrines, e. g., that of Antichrist [a fact which the Declaration implicitly denies], yet with the fathers we are of the opinion that a difference of opinion in non-fundamental doctrines cannot be considered heresy, and that it does not absolutely exclude one from the teaching office of the Church, and that true spiritual fellowship is not hindered thereby, provided it does not include a conscious sinning against God's Word, or cause dissension in the Church." But, in order to understand the above words rightly, we must with the same article (p. 295) also distinguish between "brethren who err from weakness or prejudice and seek clarity in doctrine" and "such as . . . stubbornly declare the present doctrinal differences, including 'the aberrations of recent times in the doctrine of the Last Things (Chiliasm, twofold resurrection, general conversion of the Jews, Antichrist),' 294 to be indifferent matters. . ."

Accordingly, we believe that Committee 16 understood the fathers here, but misapplied what they said, because it did not understand the A. L. C. The erring men in the A. L. C. are not brethren erring from weakness, but confirmed errorists. For years ago already, Iowa's *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* (1904, p. 23) said: "It does not satisfy the Missouri Synod that one recognizes in the papacy a part of the kingdom of the Antichrist, as the Apology to the Augsburg Confession says, and in the Pope a forerunner of the last and real Antichrist who, according to Scripture, is to have and to exercise his terrible power only a short time. Even this is treated as an important doctrine of faith, which it cannot be, already because it does not deal with anything that concerns our eternal salvation. Our synod could and cannot agree with the Missouri Synod and satisfy its demands at this point. With the Missouri Synod our synod rejects whatever is contrary to God's Word in the papacy, sees in the Roman papacy a fearful apostacy from true Christianity, and wants the question open, whether the last and complete fulfillment of what Scripture foretells of the Antichrist is still to be expected or not. Those who have gained from Scripture the conviction that the final fulfillment of these prophecies is still to be expected in the future, should have the same right in the Church as those who believe themselves to have the

\*\*\*\*\*Beside all this, the real question is whether there is a promise of such a resurrection in Scripture, and specifically in Rev. 20, 4, which the A. L. C. cites. To say that this passage speaks of a physical resurrection is a perversion of Scripture, which in turn again is made the basis of a false and foolish hope, associated with mistaken notions concerning the Kingdom of Christ. When such a delusive assumption is accompanied by such views concerning a supposed "Millennial Reign of Christ," as the universal conversion of the Jews, and a still future revelation of the Antichrist, a church has all of the marks of a complete chiliastic system. This explains how it is possible for the A. L. C. to be affiliated with such as preach the rankest kind of chiliasm today.—Editor.

conviction that everything is already fulfilled in the Roman papacy." (Compare this with what the Declaration has to say about the "question" of Antichrist.) After so many years and controversies the A. L. C. states with regard to the "question" of Antichrist and other "questions" raised in the Declaration: "We are firmly convinced that it is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines." (emphasis ours.) The A. L. C. has considered these "questions" very thoroughly, and is still firmly convinced that they are open questions. Its position is not therefore the result of weakness, in which case we should tolerate the erring persons in it (though not their errors). The A. L. C.'s position is that of confirmed errorists. As a body it is not of the opinion "that the church's obligation to the symbols includes also non-fundamental doctrines, e. g., that of Antichrist."

Besides the very serious doctrinal errors (fundamental and non-fundamental) in the Declaration, also the aforesaid and other minor mistakes in the "Doctrinal Basis" of 1938 should be corrected, lest this judgment of the fathers apply to us: **"CONDITIONS MUST BE TRULY TERRIBLE WITHIN A 'LUTHERAN' COMMUNION IN WHICH ERROR LAYS CLAIM TO EQUAL RIGHTS WITH PURE DOCTRINE AND THEN SEEKS TO JUSTIFY SUCH UNCHRISTIAN AND UNBIBLICAL PROCEDURE BY APPEALING TO THE FATHERS."** (*Lehre und Wehre*, XVIII, p. 300.)

And while we are speaking of the position of the fathers in regard to agreement in non-fundamentals as a prerequisite for church-fellowship, we hear Dr. Stoeckhardt saying: "Even though some doctrines are further removed from the center of faith than others, yet all doctrines belong within the compass of saving truth. And we of course demand unity in the whole sphere of doctrine, Scriptural doctrine, as a prerequisite of church-fellowship." (From an article entitled "Die Lehrdifferenzen zwischen Missouri und Iowa," published in *Lehre und Wehre*, L, 441.)

Another point which ought to be specially discussed is thus described in our Brief Statement: "47. . . He who is unable to accept as Scriptural the doctrines set forth in the Lutheran symbols and their rejection of the corresponding errors must not be admitted into the ministry of the Lutheran Church. 48. The Confessional obligation covers all doctrines, not only those that are treated 'ex professo,' but also those that are merely introduced in support of other doctrines."

## ● A Voice From Northern Illinois

Mr. President & Dear Brethren: I wish to read a personal declaration relating to the Union Movement. This Movement has many aspects. Yesterday we heard five reasons which still hinder the consummation of the Union with the American Lutheran Church. Each of them is all right as far as it goes, but none of them is decisive.

If we are to contemplate and to consummate a union, the first and all-important question is: **DO BOTH PARTIES AGREE IN SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OR NOT?** The answer is: **NO, THEY DO NOT SO AGREE!** From the start the ALC did NOT accept the Brief Statement of our Missouri Synod UNQUALIFIEDLY. They are willing to let US teach so, but according to their Declaration, in which they state a DIFFERENT doctrine. Of course, I presume that our men have tried to convince the other party that our Brief Statement sets forth nothing but the truth, according to Scripture and our Confessions. Evidently they have not succeed-

ed. I have seen and heard of no such statement by ALC men. If the ALC men find errors in our Brief Statement, then they are in duty-bound to disprove and correct such errors with Scripture, in order to convince us. Again I have seen and heard nothing of such a statement by the ALC men.

The second chief question is: HAVE THEY, WHERE UP TO NOW THEY HAVE HELD FALSE DOCTRINE, ADOPTED INSTEAD THE CORRECT SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE? Again I have seen and heard of no such statement by the ALC men.

Therefore it is impossible for us to unite with them. Scriptural Truth cannot be confessed AND denied at the same time within a united church-body; the Lord demands ALWAYS a full and clear confession of ALL His revealed Truths!

No doubt, the next General Convention of our Synod in Fort Wayne will be requested to rescind the action of the 1938 convention in St. Louis. Just simply rescind our action, without much argumentation pro or con, in order to retrace our steps, and again to take firmly and clearly our old Scriptural stand. This is the only Christian and honorable way out of the dilemma into which the action in St. Louis has thrown us. That will be God-pleasing and the proper thing, thankfully to maintain the great treasure which the gracious Lord has given and preserved among us until now. Then the Lord will not forsake us, but will continue to bless our Synod abundantly in the future as He has blessed it in the past. Thank you!

June 27, 1940, River Forest, Illinois. Theo. Hanssen

## • A Correction For The Theological Monthly

In the July issue of the *Concordia Theological Monthly* there is reproduced, under the heading "Need Not be Divisive," a portion of an essay of the 1939 Southern Nebraska District convention which deals with deviations in doctrine that were declared "non-divisive" by Synod's Committee No. 16 in 1938. Unfortunately a palpable and conspicuous error escaped the eye of the editor when he gave space to this treatise. We refer to the statement: "The conversion of the Jews is consistently rejected by our Synodical writers, and yet it is called a queer notion and a dream having only the appearance of Scriptural proof, and our fathers declared this queer notion does not prevent a person from remaining an orthodox Lutheran." P. 532 (Our italics.)

Now, as is also pointed out in another article of this issue of *The Confessional Lutheran*\*, our fathers never said what is attributed to them here. And it is all the more surprising to see such a declaration attributed to them, since what they did say is cited correctly in the German original as well as in an English translation in the paragraph immediately preceding the one we have quoted. They simply said that one who is committed to the queer notion in question is for all of that still to be regarded as a Christian and a Lutheran; there is nothing said about his being an orthodox Lutheran. And, of course, these are, particularly in any union discussion, two wholly different things. ("Whoever distinguishes well, teaches well.")

It will be readily realized that at a time like this we cannot be too circumspect. It will be realized

\*"Some Historical Errors of the Union Articles Adopted by the Missouri Synod in 1938."

that such misunderstanding, which by the way, unwittingly and unintentionally enough, make false witnesses of the fathers, can easily prove just the kind of stuff out of which false unions may arise. In view of such circumstances, we should be able to look to our professional theological journal for reliable if not unfailing leadership in the right direction amid the present union movement.

Will the *Concordia Theological Monthly* make the indicated correction?\*

## • Walther's Theses On The Modern Theory Of Open Question

(To be Continued)

### Thesis V

Taking up once more our discussion of Thesis V of this series of propositions, we wish to adduce some of the most pertinent material relative to it as found in Walther's own classical and now again most timely essay on the subject.

And first, then, Walther says: There are those who "make the appeal that the Church enjoys only a **fundamental, not an absolute unity**. For does the Apostle not plainly say that in the Church many build upon the right foundation also wood, hay, and stubble of erroneous human opinions, which however, because the foundation remains unimpaired thereby, do not deprive one of salvation. (I Cor. 3, 10-15, Cp. Apology of the A. C., Art. of the Church.)\* Therefore, it is said, it is also taught by the old orthodox dogmaticians that all non-fundamental articles of faith can without harm to one's salvation be disputed pro and con (in utraqueq. partem). To this we reply: This vindication of open questions rests upon a gross misunderstanding and a confusion. . . Would anyone who has even a slight acquaintance with our fathers believe that they meant it should be tolerated, if there be taught in the Church. . . that the world was created in six thousands of years, and the like?" Citing Aeg. Hunnius, Walther says: "If somebody should say contemptuously: 'For me the foundation of salvation suffices, and it is enough for me if I believe rightly in this article,' and did not want to accept better instruction as to remaining matters—such a one would indeed err with regard to lesser articles, but not by virtue of a simple error, but by virtue of one associated with contempt of the divine Word. "L. u. W., XIV, p. 103. (C. T. M., Apr., 1939, p. 257.) or again: "When the question is asked: how much of the contents of Scripture is to be believed? all differentiation (Such as is indeed in place in the presentation of the articles of faith) entirely ceases." (Loc. cit.) By his parenthetic remark Walther means to say that a man might, under circumstances, be saved without a full or accurate knowledge of all Scriptural doctrine; but this is a question that has nothing to do with the question of what a Church or an individual is to accept and confess, once they are face to face with Scriptural truth. That is why we have preferred to rule this question out of the present discussion, which discussion is intended to be primarily one concerning the false modern theory of open questions. It should be sufficient to say here that when anyone who has been building his faith and

\*\*There are also other things in the essay named which call for criticism. The *Confessional Lutheran* hopes to be able to discuss this essay more fully at a later time.

\*Indifferentists who misuse this passage would have us overlook that its express purpose is to warn: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon," i. e. on the foundation!

that of others in more or less partial darkness has an opportunity to view his work in the light of day, or more still, when it is tried in the fire of trial, e. g. the fiery trial of revealing doctrinal controversy, then such a one may need to endure the loss of much that he was want to count precious knowledge before, but which has not stood the test. The Apostle Paul, with all the learning he had to count for loss at last, is a good example in this respect. I Cor. 3, 11-15. Phil. 3, 8ff. So are Augustine and Luther, the latter of whom Walther quotes in this respect: "Such is the practice of all saints, who gladly give up their hay and straw, and stubble and consign them to the fire so that they may remain upon the foundation of salvation. Thus we have done and still do." *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 113. (*C. T. M.*, p. 356.)

Walther says further: "It is true that an absolute unity of faith and doctrine is not possible in this life, and no more than a fundamental one is attainable. But this by no means excludes that also non-fundamental errors militating against God's clear Word, when they become manifest in a church, must be attacked, and that a church cannot be regarded as a true church and treated as such, if it either raises such dogmatic non-fundamental errors to the level of its confession and, violating the organic foundation (of faith), tenaciously adheres thereto in spite of all reproof, or at least insists unionistically and indifferently that departure from God's clear Word in such points is to be a free and indifferent matter." *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 107. (*C. T. M.*, Apr., 1939, p. 262.)

(It is here that Walther inserts the historical footnote regarding the open question contentions of Iowa which has already been summarized above.)

"But what is to be done now," Walther goes on to say, "when any even non-fundamental error is taught contrary to God's clear Word, but the erring one is shown from God's clear Word that he can adduce nothing against it? What is to be done when the erring one stubbornly insists on his error, simply does not want to be instructed from God's Word, and it becomes manifest that he does not cling to his error through intellectual weakness, but because he does not want to yield even to God's Word? What is to be done when he thus indeed does not subvert the real or dogmatic but the **organic** foundation of faith, the authority of Scripture itself, Should one, when all instruction and admonition are fruitless, let conflict cease and tolerate error? Is peace to be established by declaring the matter an open question because it does not concern a fundamental article of faith?"

Answering his own question, Walther proceeds: "What man, what angel can grant a dispensation of obedience over against God's Word? Who can loose and break God's Word even only with regard to a tittle? Is not the only one who dares to do this the Antichrist, the man of sin and son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, showing himself that he is god? And, we repeat it [this has reference to *L. u. W.* XIV, p. 101, *C. T. M.*, X, p. 255], can there be a clearer proof that a body is not a true Church of God than when it does not want to submit itself unconditionally to God's Word? Can she then have accepted in true faith the rest of what she pretends to believe? Never! Whoever makes the demand that anything which God's Word clearly teaches be granted to him as an open question, such a one believes **nothing** at all on the strength of its being contained in God's Word, otherwise he would believe and accept **all** of

it." *L. u. W.*, XIV, p. 11ff. (*C. T. M.*, May 1939, p. 355.)

Walther cites a striking dictum or two of Luther's on the subject in hand, of which we shall, in bringing the discussion of this thesis to a close, adduce the final portion—

"We should learn to accord great and high esteem to the majesty and glory of the Word; for it is not such a small and light matter as the false enthusiasts of our day imagine, but one single tittle of it is greater and of more weight than heaven and earth. Hence we in this instance do not concern ourselves with Christian unity or love, but we straightway express our judgment, that is, we condemn and denounce all those who even in the smallest particle adulterate and change the majesty of the Word; for 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.' Comments on Gal. 5, 12; St. L. VIII, 2669ff" *L. u. W.* XIV, p. 112ff. (*C. T. M.*, X, 5, p. 355ff.)

Cp. Thesis 10 below.

Ref.: *L. u. W.*, XIV, pp. 101ff. (*C. T. M.*, X, 4, 5.)

A proper consideration of this thesis leaves no room for open, non-divisive questions in the field of Christian, Scriptural doctrine.

(To be Continued)

## ❁ The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of The Present Union Movement

By Rev. J. Beunger

(Supplying an Extensive Omission for our last Issue)

In our last installment of this series of articles, which discussed a new way of dealing with an old difficulty in the doctrine of Conversion on the part of Ohio and Iowa, there was an unfortunate omission of a lengthier portion of our discussion, which disturbs the sense of our whole argument. We should therefore like to supply this missing portion. Beginning with the last sentence of the first column on p. 45, our contribution should have read as follows:

Therefore, to ascribe to natural man the decision whether or not he will resist wilfully is synergism even if the decision not to resist is said to be made possible by the Holy Ghost. For the will of man in that case is and remains the deciding factor, and salvation is not by grace alone.

Therefore this older mode of trying to evade an alleged irresistible grace fell more and more into disfavor. The younger generation of theologians realized that they had to face the problem of holding fast the essentials of their older doctrine without synergism, i. e. without attributing any cooperation to natural man in his conversion. And if we want to see clearly in this matter and get a proper estimate of the Chicago Theses and of the A. L. C. Declaration, it is of the utmost importance for one thing to understand and remember that the old Ohioan and Iowan synergism is really a thing of the past, and, for another, to be well acquainted with the solution of the problem which was finally found and generally accepted in the former Iowa and Ohio Synods which are now constituent parts of the A. L. C. By ignoring their changed tactic and their present mode of presenting the matter we should be in danger of being deceived, of accepting as pure doctrine a solution of the problem which is even worse than the old error, the more so since the new phraseology has a certain ring of orthodoxy.

The change was brought about by giving up a truth which the older generation would never have

thought of denying—namely, the Scriptural truth that fallen man is by nature inclined to everything that is evil and contrary to God, even to the so called wilful resistance. The overcoming of this sinful inclination had always been the stumbling-block of the older doctrine. For to ascribe it to the Holy Ghost alone seemed to involve an irresistible grace, and to ascribe it to the will of man is synergism. In this dilemma the expedient of regarding the wilful resistance as a conduct entirely unnecessary seemed to afford relief. If there is no inner impulse, not even an inborn inclination in natural man to resist the grace of God wilfully, the absence of this conduct need not be accounted for; etc. (Continue as in first line at top of column 2, p. 45.)

\* \* \* \*

In the same article on p. 45, column 2, 25th line from the bottom between the words "is" and "so" the word "not" is omitted.

In our next installment we shall bring the discussion of the Chicago Theeses on Conversion that has already been promised.

## • For The Record

Answering a question which has been asked repeatedly, inquiry at the office of the business manager of **The Confessional Lutheran** some time ago disclosed that subscriptions were geographically distributed as follows: California, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Wisconsin, Washington, Washington, D. C., Canada, South America, England, and Australia. . . We note Dr. Engelder's apt criticism of the book, **The Spirit of the American Lutheran Church**, by Prof. P. H. Buehring, in the review columns of the August C. T. M. (p. 635ff.) Sections treating the Predestinarian Controversy and the present union movement are especially found unsatisfactory. This is in marked contrast to indiscriminating reviews which have recently appeared in **The American Lutheran** and in the June issue of **Concordia** (official organ of the Concordia Mutual Benefit League). . . The July issue of the Wisconsin Synod's **Theologische Quartalsschrift** contains a number of timely articles, among which we mention "Protestant Novena," "Attempts toward a Unified Liturgy of all Lutheran Bodies," "Lutheran Liturgist," and "Lutheran Pastors on Social Problems." . . "On May 14 our local Rio Grande Valley Pastoral Conference met at Mercedes, Texas. Among other things we discussed the union problem. No vote was taken, but the discussion revealed that he members are opposed to the present basis for union. Not one voice was raised in favor of the Union Articles." Rev. Harry H. Smith of the **Minneapolis Star-Journal** of July 22 reported that on the previous Sunday Dr. J. A. O. Stub (Norwegian Lutheran Church of America), Bishop E. Keeler, the Rev. John Dunphy of Ascension Catholic Church, and Rabbi Albert G. Minda of Temple Israel spoke at a "God's Out-of-Door Temple Service" which was part of the program of the recent Twin Cities' Aquatennial Celebration. . . We recommend that you read Dr. Bente's excellent and timely essay on Prayer-Fellowship in **Lehre und Wehre**, Feb. and March, 1905. The article is written in German. An English resume of it was recently prepared by Rev. D. L. Pfeiffer of Boyd, Minn. . . Our theological seminaries dare never become theological cemeteries.

## • At The Crossroads

"It is needless now to conceal the divisions that are apparent in the Lutheran Church. . . They do exist; and all our lamentations and the like cannot heal them; they are the legitimate developments of the past; let us rather study them in the light of past experience, in order that we may discover the mistakes then made, which prepared the way for such divisions, and endeavor to heal them at their very root. Let us no longer make the attempt 'to agree to disagree,' but honestly ask for the old paths, diligently study 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' so that we may intelligently and 'earnestly contend for it'; Let us in this way seek to become united in faith and in practice, not from motives of policy, but as an honest conviction of duty."—G. D. Bernheim (General Synod), cited by Dr. W. H. T. Dau in **Ebenezer**, p. 536.

## • The Marxist View Of Christianity

It is the purpose of these brief discussions simply to show what marxism, on the basis of its own source-materials and the statements of its adherents, teaches about religion. A lamentable lack of information along these lines seems to prevail among those who should want to be informed with regard to this matter, a matter involving questions which are most vital to their highest and dearest interests. For the present we are interested more particularly in a discussion of the Marxist view of Christianity. The following paragraphs should serve to show what Marxism teaches regarding the Christian view of things.

\* \* \* \*

### An Erroneous Statement Of The Case

A representation of this matter that is so frequent and so generally found, both among Communists and among others, as to call for special consideration is the representation as though the difference between Communism and Christianity were simply this that the latter (and indeed all religion) directs its devotees to the heaven hereafter, while Communism seeks to establish whatever of a "heaven" might be attainable here and now. Engels, e. g., in his contribution to the **History of Christianity**, published in 1885, finds some remarkable parallels between primitive Christianity and the modern working class movement. He sees in both of them movements of the oppressed who look for a coming deliverance. And then he says:—

"Christianity transfers this deliverance to the next world, to a life after death, in heaven; Socialism places it in this world, in a transformation of society." (Cf. Thorez, **Catholics and Communists**, p. 11.)

Similarly, Earl Browder, foremost representative of Marxist Communism in our own country, in his discussion with a group of students at the Union Theological Seminary on the Question of Religion and Communism, answered the question "What is the official position of the Communist Party of the U. S. on the question of religion?" as follows:—

"The Communist Party takes the position that the social function of religion and religious institutions is to act as an opiate to keep the Lower classes passive, to make them accept the bad conditions under which they have to live in the hope of a reward after death. From this estimate of the social role of religion it is quite



clear that the Communist party is the enemy of religion. We Communists try to do the opposite of what we hold religion does. We try to awaken the masses to a realization of the miserable conditions under which they live, to rouse them to revolt against these conditions, and to change these conditions of life now; not to wait for any supposed reward in heaven, but to create a heaven on earth; that is, to get those things which they dream about as good things, to realize them in life. It is clear that any serious movement to rouse and organize the masses to the realization of a better life now, must struggle against anything that tends to create passivity, to create the idea that it is better to submit passively to the powers that be." (*Communism in the United States*, p. 334.)

Now, while such a representation of things may to the unknowing or unthinking at first blush seem a correct summary of the case, it is in reality a gross misrepresentation, as an even hasty examination of the sourcebook of Christianity and of all true religion, the Bible, will soon show. We who are Christians rather believe and claim that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promises of the life that now is" as well as of that which is to come. (I Tim. 4, 8.) We believe that true Christianity makes for the best and happiest life here as well as hereafter. Consider, for instances, the Fourth Commandment, which specifically holds out the promise of well-being on earth to all who keep it, and which in millions of lives has demonstrated the truth of its promise over and over again; and on the other hand consider how often it has sadly been demonstrated that it is true what Solomon says: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it" (Pro. 30, 17) that is to say that youthful disobedience in the home is more often than not the forerunner of a conduct in later life which may end even on the gallows. Or consider the marvelous 28th Chapter of Deuteronomy, in which earthly blessings upon obedience on the one hand and a corresponding curse upon disobedience on the other hand were set before the Jewish people as a people three thousands of years ago and more. This historic alternative over that long period of time proved itself so reliable, that someone once aptly met the challenge for proof of the truth of the Holy Scriptures with the simple convincing remark: "The Jews, Sir; the Jews!" Similarly we not only point to Christ's promise to every believer that He has come that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly (John 10,10); but we specifically also consider that He has said that there is none who has left anything for the kingdom of God's sake, "who shall not receive manifold more in this present time." (Lk. 18, 30.) And so we could go on letting the Bible speak for itself before it is justly condemned." But why multiply proof with regard to what is so evidently if not deliberately misrepresented? Suffice it to say that quite apart from any question of death and the hereafter, the Christian faith offers the best "Why" of life. The believer's heaven begins already here on earth, although, thank God, he has the hope that it will by no means end here.

Similarly, it may be added, any representation of the Christian view of retribution which does not begin with a divine judgment that commences here and now is again a misrepresentation of what Christians believe. Consider, for instance, besides what has already been said above, God's threat to visit iniquity "to the fourth generation" on them that hate Him. This threat is demonstrably borne

out in human experience, although it is again true that judgment does not end here, but that it reaches out into the great eternal beyond.

\* \* \* \*

## A Communistic Caricature Of Our Great Christian Hope

While we are at this subject we may pause to note the following caricature of our great Christian hope which E. Yaroslavsky, President of the League of Militant Atheists of the Soviet Union, has in evident bitter hatred given to the world. Says he:—

"Most Christians believe that life here on earth is only the preparation for another life which will be an eternal paradise. Some picture this paradise as a sort of first-class alms house. Others picture it as a luxurious brothel. The priests assure these Christians that as the overwhelming majority of people are sinners, and paradise will be reserved only for the righteous few who carry out the precepts of the priests, most people will descend to a fiery hell, to the 'depths of Hades,' where the devils, created by god, will torture them and make them suffer every kind of torment. They will be roasted, sliced into pieces, beaten with hammers, burnt alive, etc., etc. Thus the priests of every cult have their own way of deluding the masses: the Jewish rabbi, the Roman Catholic priest, the Mohammedan mullah, the Evangelist, Baptist, and other ministers of religion, each has his own way of fooling the people. With their silly brains they stupefy their brains as opium stupefies and poisons the unfortunate opium smoker. This is why the greatest thinkers and minds of our times cannot find words more apt for defining religion than those used by Karl Marx, who called religion "the opium of the people," or the words of Lenin who said that religion is a sort of alcohol which beclouds the minds of people, who stop seeing the world as it is, and see it as it appears to the befogged, stupefied, poisoned mind of a drunkard or opium smoker. Religious people see the world and its relationships between man and man and man and nature, not as they are, but as they are represented to be by the priests and their religion.

"Is it possible to be a Communist and believe in such stuff? Is it possible to be a Leninist and believe in this mystical mummary?"

Religion in the U. S. S. R., p. 30.

(To Be Continued)

## Coming Issues

"A God-Pleasing Union" and "A New Approach" are articles among those at hand for our next issue. The last-named is by a new contributor, Rev. C. M. Gullerud of Brooking, S. Dak.

Unfinished serial articles will be continued. Attention should again be called to the importance of material contained in the series by Rev. J. Buenger. This material will prove particularly helpful for conference discussion.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

\*Meaning men like Marx, Engels, Lenin, etc. whom Communists so rate.—Editor.

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v. 19

# THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."--I Cor. 1, 10.

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IN THIS ISSUE: The Dogmatic-Historical Background of the Present Union Movement—Defining Unionism—A Timely Warning—Resisting the Beginning of Things—Prayer-Fellowship—What Marxism Has to Say Regarding Christ and Other Biblical Characters—A New Approach.

## • The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of The Present Union Movement

With Special Reference to the Specific  
Doctrines Involved

By Rev. J. Buenger  
(Continued)

### The Chicago Theses on Conversion

In our discussion of the doctrine of Conversion as related to the dogmatic-historical background of the present union movement we had promised first of all to reproduce the respective theses which were presented as the doctrinal position of the Ohio and Iowa Synods at the official intersynodical conference in Chicago in May, 1920. It has been pointed out that these theses contain all of the essential features of the revised form of doctrine of these synods relative to the subject.

The theses are as follows:

#### NATURAL AND WILFUL RESISTANCE

Through the Fall the nature of man has become so completely corrupt that he is not only spiritually blind and dead, but that he even takes a stand of enmity and resistance against God. Yet he still retains the *capacitas passiva*, i.e. God's almighty grace is able to overcome his natural corruption and to awaken him unto new life. However, it is possible on the part of man that such an attitude and such a condition set in, that not even the almighty grace of God—who in this instance does not act in His unveiled majesty, not with a *gratia irresistibilis*—can save him. To designate that natural condition and this attitude, which makes salvation of man impossible, these terms are in use in the Lutheran Church: "natural" and "wilful" resistance.

#### A. "Natural Resistance"

1. The so-called natural resistance is that *habitus* with regard to all things spiritual, innate and inherent in all men by nature, and in the same manner, which becomes evident and active in this,

a. that natural man loves sin and serves it. John 3, 19; Tit. 3, 3; Rom. 6, 17 etc.

b. that to natural man all things spiritual are foolishness; cf. Nicodemus; I Cor. 2, 14; Eph. 4, 18. F. C. 590, 9ff.

c. that especially God's plan and means of salvation, above all the cross of Christ, are foolishness and an offence to him. I Cod. 1, 18; F. C. 590, 12, 13.

d. that he is inimical toward God and in the blindness of his heart in a hostile manner resists all influence of the Holy Ghost, yes, knowingly and willingly—*sciens volensque*—, and looks upon God as his enemy, who, seeking to convert him, only disturbs his pleasure and seeks to deprive him of his most cherished and best possessions. Mt. 19, 22; Acts 26, 11; II Tim. 1, 13; F. C. 592, 17, 18.

e. finally, that natural man is and does all this gladly and due to his nature cannot be, neither wills to do, nor is capable of doing, otherwise. Rom. 8, 7; 3, 19; Phil. 2, 13; F. C. 593, 20, 21.

2. This natural resistance, which in different men shows forth development now more in one than more in another direction, before conversion rules unimpeded and without interruption, is broken gradually in conversion, but is in evidence in the children of God even after conversion or opposition or as lust of the flesh against the Spirit. Gal. 5, 17; Rom. 7, 23; F. C. 608, 84.

3. Only the Holy Ghost is able to break and overcome this resistance of natural man. He does so by preaching and hearing His Word, softening our hearts—*emollit corda nostra*— and drawing man, so that through the preaching of the LAW he comes to know his sins and God's wrath and experiences in his heart true terrors, contrition and sorrow and through the preaching and consideration of the Holy Gospel concerning the gracious forgiveness of sins

in Christ a spark of faith is kindled in him, etc. F. C. 601, 54.

4. Only in and by conversion is a new, good will presented unto men, and only after conversion is man himself able to desire the divine and to give his assent and cooperation toward the Good.

#### B. "Wilful Resistance"

1. Wilful resistance is that attitude of sinful man by which he makes impossible in him the work of the Holy Ghost through the means of grace, or so hinders the incipient work of the Holy Ghost that it cannot be brought to a blessed finish. This can happen before, in, and even after conversion. A direct, conscious decision against God is involved which is the deepest and last cause of the loss of man's salvation. Mt. 23, 37; John 3, 18; 5, 40; 16, 9; Mt. 23, 3; 5, 6; 21, 35. 38. 39; F. C. 602, 57, 58; 712, 39-42.

2. Scripture and Confession designate this conduct by various terms: to despise the Word, Prov. 13, 13; to pull away the shoulder from the Lord, stop their ears, make their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear. Zech. 7, 11, 12; to be stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears and always resist the Holy Ghost; Acts 7, 51; to put the Word from you, Acts 13, 46; to harden their hearts and believe not, Acts 19, 9; to oppose and blaspheme, Acts 18, 6; to harden your heart, Hebr. 3, 8; not to believe, Hebr. 4, 2, 6; to despise the invitation, the call, Mt. 25, 3, 5, 6; to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, Jude v. 4; to blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, Mk. 3, 29; obstinately and persistently to resist, to resist the Word entirely, not to be rendered fit by God for grace, F. C. 608, 83; to persistently oppose the known truth, II Pet. 2, 21; F. C. 603, 60; to grieve the Holy Ghost, Eph. 4, 20; to sin wilfully —*hekousios*—; Heb. 10, 26; to turn from the Holy Ghost, to sweep and garnish again your heart to the devil, II Pet. 2, 20; Lk. 11, 25; F. C. 713, 42; etc.

3. Wilful resistance expresses itself, according to F. C. 555, 12 and 712, 30-42,

a. before conversion in this that man not at all hears the Word, when through the Word the Holy Spirit would come unto him, stops his ears and hardens his heart, persistently and continually flees from every opportunity to hear the Word or to submit to its influence, and in this manner forecloses the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost so that He cannot perform His work in them; Acts 7, 51; Mt. 22, 6; Heb. 3, 8; 4, 2, 7.

b. in conversion in this that man makes light of the Word he has heard, i.e. he wilfully obliterates every impression made upon him by the Holy Ghost through the Word, being immaterial whether this refers to the recognition of sin by the Law or the recognition of grace by the Gospel—thus making his decision against God; Acts 24, 25. 26. 28; John 8, 30. 31. 37; F. C. 603, 60.

c. in this that man, after being converted and becoming a child of God by the Holy Ghost, acts contrary to conscience, grieves the Holy Ghost, sins wilfully, and sweeps and garnishes his heart for the devil. F. C. 713, 42; II Pet. 2, 10, 20; Eph. 4, 30; Heb. 10, 26; Lk. 11, 25.

4. When the so-called wilful resistance, this self-hardening of the heart, occurs in man, it is not then yet to be immediately inferred that the possibility of conversion is excluded; however, the more frequently man wilfully opposes the drawing of the

Holy Ghost, so much scantier becomes that possibility and finally the judgement of God overtakes him. Mt. 23, 37. 38 (how often!—your house); Mt. 22, 7; Job 33, 29. 30; John 12, 39, 40.

5. The expression "wilful resistance" referring to this conduct of man which hinders conversion and salvation is used on the basis of Scripture (Heb. 10, 26) and the F. C. (555, 12; 608, 60, 83; 712, 39-42; 721, 78. 83. 85) and for this reason has full justification for use (*Hausrecht*) in the Lutheran Church as in this particular sense it is used in practice everywhere, e.g. Walther, Ev. Postille 216, 1, 9.

6. The question of how man comes to this conduct of self-hardening can be answered as little as the question why Adam sinned; for God has revealed to us nothing about the depths of man's personal inner life. But this does not prevent our belief that there is such self-hardening, and that just this is the reason for man's loss of his salvation.

7. If man does not lapse into this attitude which hinders conversion or destroys his state of grace, then this in nowise indicates any preference or merit in man.

8. To say that "due to the discontinuance" of wilful resistance man has made possible his conversion and salvation is a synergistic thought and expression, F. C. 601, 55. To say that "God breaks the wilful resistance of that man whose conversion He has purposed" is a Calvinistic thought and expression. F. C. 603, 60; 608, 82, 83.

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Over against this presentation of the Ohio-Iowa doctrine the theses of the other side stressed the genuine Lutheran doctrine of conversion as taught in the Synodical Conference.

These theses read as follows:

#### THE CONDUCT OF MAN OVER AGAINST THE CONVERTING AND SAVING GRACE OF GOD

1. Since the Fall, man is by nature flesh (John 3, 6) and hence an enemy of God (Rom. 8, 7). His intellect is darkened (I Cor. 2, 14; his will is turned away from God and directed only toward what is evil (John 8, 34; II Tim. 2, 26). He is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2, 1). Being in this condition, man is of himself incapable of anything good and unfit for it. He wills, and can will and do, only that which is evil and contrary to God. This is the natural condition of all men without exception, Rom. 3, 12; F. C. 589, 7).

2. Out of pure mercy God the Holy Ghost approaches these men, who are spiritually dead and enemies of God, by the preaching of His Word. By the preaching of the Law He desires to bring them to a knowledge of their sins and of the danger of God, and through the Gospel, by the preaching of the free grace of God in Christ Jesus He desires to draw them to Himself, to convert them to Himself. It is God's gracious will, equally earnest towards all men, that all be saved and that all come to the knowledge of the truth. (I Tim. 2, 4).

3. Natural man in nowise meets this gracious operation of the Holy Ghost on his heart (Rom. 9, 16; F. C. 589, 7), but resists it. He cannot but resist it, because he is unfit for anything good, an enemy of God and a servant of sin. (Rom. 8, 7; F. C. 592, 17. 18; 598, 44.) He resists the grace of God with all his powers, knowingly and willingly (F. C. 593, 21) and in a hostile spirit (F. C. 593, 18.

22). Of his own accord he strives only to frustrate the gracious work of God in him. This is the natural attitude of all men towards the gracious work of God by His Word as far as their own will and ability are concerned.

4. This resistance against the Word and grace of God is expressed and manifested in individuals differently, according to their characteristic traits or according to external circumstances, but it is essentially the same in all men. In its real essence it is nothing else than the refusal of grace (Mt. 23, 37), rebellion against God and His grace. (F. C. 609, 88.) We call this resistance natural resistance inasmuch as man knowingly and willingly resists (F. C. 593, 21).—Over against the grace of God in His Word all men are equally guilty; this means that their attitude toward the Word and grace of God is only evil. This applies equally to those who are converted by the grace of God and to those who are lost by their own fault. (F. C. 716, 57, 58).

5. Natural man cannot by his own powers omit, break and hinder, nor even diminish this resistance. He is and remains an enemy of God and resists the Word and will of God until he is converted (F. C. 589, 5; 590, 11, 12; 593, 21; 602, 59). Nor can man omit this resistance by spiritual powers which God as some hold, confers on him before he is converted and which man is supposed to employ. This would presuppose that natural man, after all, has of himself a will to convert himself and also the ability to accept, and to properly employ, these spiritual powers offered him.

6. True, even before his conversion a person receives in his heart various impressions of the operation of the Law and the Gospel, all kinds of emotions which he cannot evade (*motus inevitabiles*, Mk. 6, 20; Lk. 4, 22; Acts 24, 25; John 16, 8-11). However, these emotions a person suffers by the operation of God upon him from without, independently of his own volition, yea in opposition to the same. Before conversion no inward change for the good takes place in man. On the contrary, of his own accord he merely tends to ward off these impressions and to suppress these emotions. Until renewed by God, his will remains the same obstinate will that is at enmity with God. There is no intermediate state between being converted and unconverted, between spiritual death and spiritual life.

7. God alone, by the operation of His mighty grace (Eph. 1, 19), can overcome this resistance in man against His grace and His Word. He does it by converting man to Him, this means by bringing a person who has learned to know his perdition by means of the Law and is terrified by it to faith in His Savior by means of the Gospel, thus drawing the person to him, raising him from spiritual death, regenerating and renewing him (Eph. 2, 8, 9). The statement that man's conversion and salvation depend not alone on God's grace but in a certain sense also on the conduct of man is synergism, it expressly denies the "*sola gratia*" (F. C. 606, 77; 608, 86; 603, 61.) However, conversion does not take place by irresistible grace or by coercion, for conversion consists in this very thing, that God, by means of the Gospel, turns a rebellious will into an obedient will, and unwilling person into a willing one. (F. C. 603, 62; 609, 87, 88.)

8. Through conversion man's attitude towards the Word and grace of God is entirely changed. In the power of God, who works in him both to will and to do, the person willingly assents to what God pro-

poses. There arise in him good emotions and sensations of a truly spiritual nature. These are the new spiritual life in him. He begins to fear, love, and trust in God. He is engaged in the daily practice of repentance and cooperates in good works, which the Holy Ghost accomplishes in him. (F. C. 603, 63; 604, 65, 66; 605, 70; 609, 88.)—Indeed, even in the regenerate there still remains a certain resistance toward the Word and grace of God. Until death they bear the sinful flesh. However, God has created in them the new man who willingly serves God. In the regenerate—and only in these—there takes place a constant struggle; the wrestling of the spirit with the flesh, in which the spirit, by the power and grace of God, is victorious and conquers the flesh as long as the Christian by faith clings to the Word and grace of God. (F. C. 608, 84, 85; Gal. 5, 17; Rom. 7, 23, 25.)

9. It is God alone who is able to convert and quicken spiritually dead men, and who does convert and quicken them by His grace in the Word. But, alas, not all men are converted and saved. This is in nowise God's fault. His grace is sufficient (*sufficiens*) for all the efficacious (*efficax*) in all who hear the Word. By the preaching of His Word God gives to all who hear it an opportunity to be converted and saved. God desires to be efficacious in all through the Word, to give to all the power and ability to accept the Word (F. C. 710, 29). However, the grace of God does not operate in an irresistible manner. Man can resist it and block the way to the Holy Ghost and His operations of grace. He who resists the Holy Spirit continually and persistently, who thrusts the grace of God from him continually, is not converted but is lost by his own fault (F. C. 602, 57-60; 713, 40-42).

10. From all this it follows that there is no two-fold specifically different conduct in man before his conversion, a so-called natural and a so-called wilful one. By nature and by their own powers all men conduct themselves only evil towards God's Word and grace. They do not want God's grace but resist it in a hostile spirit until God converts the ones, changes their minds and makes willing persons out of unwilling ones and rebels. The rest, through their own fault persist in their resistance, harden themselves and become increasingly obdurate in this condition the more earnestly God operates upon them by the means of His Word, until finally they are overtaken by the condemnation of hardening. (From this preserve us, heavenly Father!)

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The clashing of contradictory opinions in these two sets of theses, as far as the main point of controversy is concerned, is so evident that at first there seemed little hope of ever reaching an agreement. The one is a typical presentation of the newer Ohio-Iowa position. Here we have all the characteristic features of this view of man's conduct over against the saving grace of God: a) the natural resistance, b) the wilful resistance. The natural resistance described as enmity against God. Even the *sciens volensque* of the F. C. is included in the description of this kind of resistance, because according to the F. C. this resistance can be, and is, overcome by the Holy Ghost, which our opponents would never say of the wilful resistance; so this feature must be registered with the natural resistance!

Of this resistance it is finally said that it is finally said that it is broken and overcome by the Holy Ghost without any cooperation of man, whereby all synergism is excluded.

The wilful resistance, on the other hand, is described as that peculiar conduct which makes any further operation of the Holy Ghost impossible, as long as man offers that resistance. The origin of the wilful resistance is put on the same level with the origin of sin in paradise, whereby the natural inclination of fallen man to this sin is denied and only the possibility of it is admitted. If man does not at all, or no longer, resist wilfully we have, according to this theory, merely the natural state of affairs, the conduct of man which is to be expected, for the natural resistance remains just the same and may be overcome by the Holy Ghost. But the statement that man by omitting something which need not be there had made his conversion possible may now safely be rejected by them and is rejected in these theses. It will be remembered that formerly the omitting of this resistance always offered the chief difficulty, and it would do this again the moment it would be admitted that fallen man by nature is inclined to this conduct.

The other theses present the well known position of the Synodical Conference. Thesis 4 shows in what sense we also speak of natural and wilful resistance, not in order to distinguish between two different kinds of resistance but only to characterize one and the same evil conduct in two different aspects. The equal guilt of all men over against the grace of God is stressed unreservedly. The cause of non-conversion is found in the continual and persistent remaining in that conduct to which all men are inclined by nature. And finally thesis 10 in plain words summarily rejects as faulty the distinction between two kinds of resistance.

How was it possible to harmonize these two contradictory sets of theses? For a while the case looked hopeless. But the representatives of the Ohio and Iowa Synods, after carefully examining the document presented to them by the other side found a way out of the difficulty. They declared that they could accept these theses if a few unessential changes were made. These changes were granted after the representatives of the Synodical Conference had satisfied themselves that no synergism was involved by them, as indeed it was not; it would be a misnomer still to call this newer mode of teaching synergism, because, according to it the overcoming of the (natural) resistance is ascribed

to the Holy Ghost alone, and wilful resistance is never overcome.

The result of this agreement was the so-called Chicago Theses on Conversion, the first part of the Intersynodical Theses finished in 1928. Comparing these theses with the original draft you will at once perceive how it happened that their language is "Missourian" and was therefore generally understood in the sense of the Synodical Conference on our side, while the Ohioans and Iowans in spite of that phraseology found their own doctrine in these theses. "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

In order to guide their thoughts, so that they might find their own view in a document couched in language somewhat unfamiliar to them, expressions which had been added, changed, or were of special importance to them, were printed in bold type in the copies of these theses which were distributed among the pastors of the Ohio and Iowa Synods, so that it was practically impossible for them to miss the sense that was indicated by these changes. Here is a rendering of that edition of these Chicago Theses as it appeared in the official English translation at that time.

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#### **THE CONDUCT OF MAN OVER AGAINST THE CONVERTING AND SAVING GRACE OF GOD**

1. Since the Fall, man is by nature flesh (John 3, 6) and hence an enemy of God (Rom. 8, 7). His intellect is darkened (I Cor. 2, 14); his will is turned away from God and directed only towards what is evil (John 8, 34; II Tim. 2, 26). He is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2, 1). Being in this condition, man is of himself incapable of anything good and unfit for it. He wills, and can will and do, only that which is evil and contrary to God. This is the natural condition of all men without exception (Rom. 3, 12; F. C. 589, 7).

2. Out of pure mercy God the Holy Ghost approaches these men who are spiritually dead and enemies of God by the preaching of His Word. By the preaching of the Law He desires to bring them to a knowledge of their sins and the anger of God; by the preaching of the Gospel He desires to produce in them the knowledge of salvation, of the free grace of God in Christ. In this manner He desires to convert them to Himself. It is God's gracious will, equally earnest towards all men, that all be saved and that all come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2, 4.)

3. Natural man in nowise meets this gracious operation of the Holy Spirit in his heart (Rom. 9, 16; F. C. 589, 7), but resists it. He cannot but resist it, because he is unfit for anything good, an enemy of God, and a servant of sin. (Rom. 8, 7; F. C. 592, 17, 18; 598, 44). He resists the grace of God with all his powers, knowingly, willingly (F. C. 593, 21) and in a hostile spirit (F. C. 593, 18, 22) of his own accord he strives only to frustrate the gracious will of God in him. This is the natural attitude of all men towards the gracious work of God by His Word as far as their own will and ability is concerned.

4. This resistance against the Word and grace of God is expressed and manifested in individuals differently, according to their characteristic traits or according to external circumstances, but it is essentially the same in all men. In its real essence it is nothing else than the refusal of grace, rebellion against God and His grace. (F. C. 609, 88.) This resistance springs from the innate evil nature of man, from original sin, and consists in the hostile opposition which man knowingly and purposely sets against grace. (F. C. 593, 21.) Over against the grace of God in His Word all men are **by nature** equally guilty; (*in adam culpa*, Rom. 3, 23, 24); this means that by nature their attitude towards the work and grace of God is evil only. This applies equally to those who are converted by the grace of God and to those who are lost by their own fault. (F. C. 716, 57, 58.)

5. Natural man cannot by his own powers omit, break, and hinder, nor even diminish this resistance. Man is and remains an enemy of God and resists the Word and will of God until faith in Christ is wrought in him by the Holy Spirit. (F. C. 589, 5; 590, 11, 12; 593, 21; 602, 59.) Nor can man omit this resistance by spiritual powers which God, as some hold, confers on him before his conversion and which man is supposed to employ. This would presuppose that man, after all, has by nature, or before his conversion, a will to convert himself, and also the ability to accept, and to properly employ, the spiritual powers offered him.

6. True, even before faith is kindled, a person receives in his heart various impressions of the operation of the Law and the Gospel, all kinds of emotions which he cannot evade (*motus inevitabiles*, Mk. 6, 20; Lk. 4, 22; Acts 24, 25; John 16, 8-11). However, these emotions a person suffers by the operation of God upon him from without, independently of his own volition, yea, in opposition to the same. Before his regeneration no inward change for the good takes place in the person by which he would be enabled, even before conversion, through the operation of grace to submit to the grace of God, to assume a passive attitude to grace, to allow the grace of God to continue its operation upon him, etc. (I Cor. 2, 14.) On the contrary, all that man is able to do and does of his own accord merely tends to ward off these impressions and to suppress these emotions. Until renewed by God, his will remains the same obstinate will that is at enmity with God. **There is no intermediate state between being converted and being unconverted**, between spiritual death and spiritual life. (F. C. 602, 59; 593, 20, 21.)

7. God alone, by the operation of His mighty grace, can overcome this resistance in man against His grace and His Word (Eph. 1, 19; 2, 5-10; Rom. 9, 16). He does it by bringing a person who has learned to know his perdition by means of the Law and is terrified by God's anger, to faith in His Savior by means of the Gospel, thus drawing the person to Him, raising him from spiritual death, regenerating and renewing him. (Eph. 2, 8, 9; F. C. 609, 87; 603, 61.) However, conversion does not take place by irresistible grace or by coercion, which would be the same thing; for conversion consists in this very thing, that God, by means of the Gospel, turns a rebellious will into an obedient will, an unwilling person into a willing one. (F. C. 603, 60; 609, 87, 88.)

8. When faith is kindled, man's attitude towards the Word and grace of God is entirely changed. In the power of God who works in him both to will and to do, the person willingly assents to

what God proposes. There arise in him good emotions and sensations of a truly spiritual nature. These are the new spiritual life in him. Immediately man begins to fear, love, and trust in God. He is engaged in the daily practice of repentance and cooperates in good works, which the Holy Ghost accomplishes in him. (F. C. 603, 63; 604, 65, 66; 605, 70; 609, 88.) Indeed even in the regenerate there still remains a certain resistance towards the Word and grace of God. Until death they bear the sinful flesh. However, God has created in them the new man, who willingly serves God. In the regenerate—and only in these—there takes place a constant struggle: the wrestling of the spirit with the flesh, in which the spirit, by the power and grace of God is victorious and conquers the flesh as long as the Christian by faith clings to the Word and grace of God. (F. C. 608, 84, 85; Gal. 5, 17; Rom. 7, 23, 25.)

9. It is God alone who is able to convert and quicken spiritually dead men, and does convert and quicken them by his grace in the Word. But, alas, not all men are converted and saved. This is in no wise God's fault. His grace is universal (*universalis*); it is sufficient (*sufficiens*) for all and efficacious (*efficax*) in all who hear the Word. By the preaching of His Word, God gives to all the power and ability to accept His Word (F. C. 710, 29). However the grace of God does not operate in an irresistible manner. Man can resist it and block the way of the Holy Spirit and His operations of grace, so He **cannot achieve** His work in man. Anyone resisting the Holy Spirit continually and persistently, anyone thrusting the grace of God from him continually and wilfully, is not converted, but is lost by his own fault. (F. C. 602, 57-60; 713, 40-42.)

10. Accordingly we confess:

a) That conversion is **solely and alone** the work of divine grace, which man **by nature** does nothing but resist, and cannot but resist until God gives him faith;

b) That God earnestly **desires** to work conversion in all men, but cannot perform His work in all those who, by their own fault, **wilfully** persevere in their resistance, **harden** themselves, and become increasingly **obdurate** in this condition the more earnestly God operates on them by means of His Word and thus continue to **heap up** guilt against themselves (Mt. 23, 37) until finally they may be overtaken by the condemnation of hardening.

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It will be seen that the changes, additions and underscorings noted above convert the original meaning of the theses under discussion into their very opposite. While the theses were meant to refute the idea of a twofold resistance, they now not only suggest this error, but thesis 10 which had expressly rejected the false distinction now plainly distinguishes between a) the natural resistance which is overcome by the Holy Ghost, and b) the wilful resistance which He is unable to overcome. The equal guilt is in Par. 4 restricted to the natural resistance which is the same in all men, while Theses 10 now asserts that **heaped up** guilt of those who resist wilfully. Thus the idea of an

unequal conduct of man over against the saving grace of God, which has at all times been the shibboleth of Pelagians, synergists, and similar errorists, was established in theses accepted by both sides! And still this result, then as now, was ascribed to the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit; then as now our representatives treated the men of the other side as Christian gentlemen, trusting their word and promise that nothing would be veiled; then as now we were, and are, admonished over and over again not to do our opponents wrong by any suspicion and to have full confidence in our committee.

None of us will be ready to judge those who represented us at that time too harshly; for although the new mode of teaching of our opponents was already broached in their periodicals and taught in their seminaries, it had not yet been dealt with and exposed in our publications, and it was not easy for our brethren to see their way clearly in a new and bewildering situation. Even now, after two decades, many of our pastors and professors have not yet been able to detect the double meaning hidden in the Chicago Theses on Conversion.

When after lengthy and fruitless argumentation we were able to produce a copy of the Ohio-Iowa edition of the theses\*, our committee began to see the matter in a different light. Its members admitted that the theses in their present form were not yet an adequate doctrinal basis for a union. However, they refused to change the wording of them, once they had been accepted. They were of the opinion that they would be able to rectify their error in antitheses which now were absolutely necessary. Hence, before shedding the proper light on the corresponding portion of the A.L.C. Declaration, we shall, God willing, in our next installment first analyze these antitheses of the Chicago document. But let us not forget meanwhile that the commissioners of the former Iowa and Ohio Synods, by changing, adding (supplementing) and underscoring (emphasizing) a few expressions which were important to them, once managed to turn the original sense of a document presented to them into its opposite meaning, accepted it in this new form as their own confession, and all along assured the members of our committee that they were in perfect agreement with them.

(To be Continued)

\*We still have an original copy on file and will through **The Confessional Lutheran** make provision for its permanent keeping. (Editor.)

## ● The Marxist View Of Christianity

### The Reality of Christ and of Other Biblical Characters

(Continued)

We have briefly considered Communism's view of religion in general. But what of its attitude over against the historical evidences of Christianity? What do Communists believe concerning the historicity of our Lord Jesus Christ and of other Biblical characters? Communism has spoken also on such questions. In his interview with the students of Union Theological Seminary, which has already been referred to, Browder for instance was asked the question: "Do you regard the Hebrew prophets and Jesus as historical figures, and if so, have they any social significance?" His answer was—

"They are historical figures at least in the sense that they have played quite a role in the historical development of the human mind. Whether they were the product of the human mind or whether they had some more direct material basis is not important to us. We do not enter the field of higher criticism."\* (*Communism in the United States*, p. 349.)

The American negro Communist, Langston Hughes, has spoken more bluntly. In his poem, "Goodbye Christ," he has said—

Listen Christ,  
You did all right in your day, I reckon—  
But that day's gone now.  
They ghosted you up a swell story, too,  
Called it Bible—  
But it's dead now.  
The popes and the preachers've  
Made too much money from it.  
They've sold you to too many

Kings, generals, robbers, and killers—  
Even to the Tzar and the Cossacks,  
Even to Rockefeller's Church,  
Even to THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.  
You ain't no good no more.  
They've pawned you  
Till you've done wore out.

Goodbye,  
Christ Jesus Lord God Jehova,  
Beat it on away from here now.  
Make way for a new guy with no religion at all—  
A real guy named  
Marx Communist Lenin Peasant Stalin Worker  
ME—

I said, ME!

Go ahead on now,  
You're getting in the way of things, Lord.  
And please take Saint Ghandi with you when  
you go,  
And Saint Pope Pius,  
And Saint Aimee McPherson,  
And big black Saint Becton  
Of the consecrated Dime,  
And step on the gas, Christ!  
Move!  
Don't be so slow about movin'!  
The world is mine from now on—

\*In other words, Jesus is historical at least in the sense that Santa Claus and Mickey Mouse are! Communists seem to have an uncanny sense of humor in their use of language. Editor.



And nobody's gonna sell ME  
To a king, or a general,  
Or a millionaire.

(This poem originally appeared in the November-December 1932 issue of the radical magazine, "The Negro Worker." Cp. **Are They Communists or Cat-paws**, Published by Ray P. Chase Research Bureau, Minneapolis, Minn., 1938, p. 54.)

In Russia the real sentiment of Communists with respect to Christ has been given expression in such a manner as to leave no doubt about the matter. Every important center has its anti-religious museum. We may later on have a bit to say about these citadels of atheism, which are invariably housed in former cathedrals that were closed to religious services with the advent of Bolshevism in the land of the Red. Near Kassan, on the Volga, a monument has been erected to Judas Iscariot. The figure is that of a giant with his fists threatening heaven. The speaker at the unveiling exercises said that the government had debated for some time whether the monument should be to Lucifer, to Cain, or Judas. The latter was chosen because he betrayed Christ. (Cp. **Religious Digest**, Jan., 1937, p. 77.)

It can hardly be our purpose here to dwell on the multitude of evidences which might be adduced by way of refutation of such a senseless view of things as that which has thus been briefly discussed. The reality and historicity of Jesus Christ are such as to have moved someone nicely to say: History is His Story. Our very way of reckoning time is an indication and a constant reminder of His importance, of His central place, in the affairs and in the thinking of men. Archaeological research has constantly brought to light such incontrovertible proof regarding Christ and the Scriptures as to have made it to be literally true that the very stones have cried out time and again when men began to question their truth in unfounded and unreasonable unbelief. The verdict of common sense is in itself enough to move a man to a historical acceptance of the facts regarding the Scriptures and their Christ—not to speak of the testimony of infidels who were contemporary or almost contemporary with them.

(To be Continued)

## Defining Unionism

"When we condemn unionism, the attempt is sometimes made, consciously or unconsciously, to becloud the issue by making a very wide face and saying: Certainly we are against unionism, but what is unionism?"

"Let us here retain our simplicity of mind and not act as though the question of unionism involves any difficult problems. Reduced to its basic principles and stated in the simplest terms, unionism simply is the toleration of error; not of all error, but of some error."

Dir. M. Graebner, in Essay, Southern Nebraska District, 1939, p. 27.

## Resisting The Beginning Of Things

No beginnings of things, however small, are to be neglected; because continuance makes them great; and the very contempt they are held in gives them opportunity to gain that strength which cannot be resisted.—Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*.

\*Cp. e. g. *American Lutheran*, Feb., 1910, p. 3.—Editor.

## A Timely Warning

The gatherings which have recently been held in the interest of missions (Call of the Cross) were also discussed at the meeting of the college of presidents in St. Louis. And the great task which God has at present given us in the general world conflagration was again emphasized. Becoming gratefulness for the heritage which we have received from our fathers is to be evidenced by our passing this precious treasure on. But it must really also be the whole, full heritage. I must confess that I am filled with many misgivings in this respect. There is much talk about this heritage of the fathers. But is this heritage also being everywhere fully recognized and inculcated upon the present generation: the pious earnestness, the great faithfulness of the fathers in clinging to every word of the Scriptures, and their refusal to make concessions either in doctrine or in life to the current of the times which we note on every hand, and to the temper of the wind which blows about us from the most diverse directions? There will be a good opportunity to view these dangers properly and to overcome them with the help of God—and they are according to my conviction greater than is largely realized—in connection with such discussions as are in prospect at some district gatherings, namely, how we may faithfully preserve the heritage of the fathers during the second century. We want to be, and are to be, faithful witnesses. What our fathers were over against their immigrant fellow-nationals and brethren in faith that we are to be over against our children and children's children and our environment among the unchurched masses.—Dr. L. Fuerbringer, *Lutheraner*, May 21, 1940.

## Prayer-Fellowship

"Mixed (promiscuous) prayer among those who confess the truth and those who deny any part of it, is sinful unionism."—*Concordia Cyclopedia*, under "Unionism."

## A New Approach

Rev. C. M. Gullerud, Brookings, S. Dak.

A recent editorial pronouncement in an official organ of the Missouri Synod informs us that the term "non-fundamental" as it appears in the St. Louis Articles of Union is to be understood as being identical with the term "open questions." This moves the discussion of this matter into an entirely different sphere from that which it has occupied up to this time. If the four points which have been termed "non-fundamental" in the 1938 union documents\* are nothing but "theological problems" or open questions (in the proper sense of the word), then we are agreed that they must be non-divisive and non-disruptive of fellowship; that agreement with respect to them is not a necessary pre-requisite to church-fellowship; and that those who would destroy the unity of the Church because of such points should properly be regarded as fomenters of "schismatic communions." However, if this contention be correct that these four points are open questions,

\*Millennialism, a supposedly impending conversion of the Jews, the dream of a special physical resurrection of the martyrs, and a still unrevealed manifestation of the Antichrist.—Editor.

then we should also have to say that the Missouri Synod went too far in resolution No. 3 of its 1938 Union documents. For in this resolution it is required of its Union Committee to endeavor to establish full agreement also in these points. But if it was the intention of Committee 16 (as it is now editorially maintained it was) that these points are open questions, then what would be the basis for reaching such agreement, since open questions or theological problems (in the proper sense of the word) are simply questions which are not answered in Scripture, so that we can not reach a definite conclusion with regard to them? Would such a requirement be in conformity with the declaration of our own Brief Statement which says that open questions must remain open questions for the reason that "neither an individual nor the Church as a whole is permitted to develop or augment the Christian doctrine"? If these points are actually open questions, then Synodical Resolution No. 3 in the union documents went beyond the boundary set in Missouri's Brief Statement (which we believe to be a Scriptural boundary) with regard to open questions; and so would its Union Committee have gone beyond this boundary when it stated of these points: "It is our sacred duty to endeavor to reach an agreement in such articles also."\*\*\*

But we are not ready to agree that the points at issue are theological problems or open questions. In taking this position, we merely take our stand with the Brief Statement which we have accepted as a true Scriptural presentation of doctrine. Our Brief Statement would indeed have involved itself in a contradiction if it regarded such questions as open, which it in paragraphs 42 and 43 had declared closed and definitely settled on the basis of the clear Word of God. But the A. L. C. has correctly understood that the Brief Statement took a definite stand as to these matters. This is made clear when they in their Declaration, among other things, take exception to these four points in the Brief Statement and show clearly that they wish to have the permission to regard these same points as open questions. Here indeed the A. L. C. understood the Brief Statement correctly. For our Brief Statement has in truth definitely rejected the views for which the A. L. C. Declaration asks tolerance and which they desire to regard as open questions.

In order to illustrate the fact that Missouri's Brief Statement does not regard the points at issue as open questions, let us for instance take the point concerning the mass conversion of Israel. Here our Brief Statement clearly declares, in Par. 42, that we reject every type of Millennialism and Chiliasm. Among such types it lists the opinion "that before the end of the world a universal conversion of the Jewish nation (of Israel according to the flesh) will take place." And again it states: "Scripture clearly teaches and we teach accordingly. . . . that there will be no general conversion, a conversion en masse of the Jewish nation. Rom. 11, 7; II Cor. 3, 14; Rom. 11, 25; I Thess. 2, 16." Does this sound as though the Brief Statement leaves this point an open question which must be left open? Also against the opinion that there will be a special resurrection of the martyrs before the end, our Brief Statement declares that "Scripture teaches clearly and we teach accordingly. . . . that there will be but one resurrection from the dead, John 5, 26; 6, 39, 40." Does this not show that Missouri's Brief Statement regarded any opinion according to which it is

held that a special resurrection of a whole class of people such as the martyrs is to take place, as an overthrowing of the doctrine of the general resurrection of the dead on the last day? (The contention that the view that the resurrection of the martyrs is at once to glory changes this, is not pertinent. For the Brief Statement clearly shows that it is a matter which concerns the doctrine of the general resurrection of the dead. If this were not the case, then a reference to such passages as John 6, 39, 40 in this connection would be pointless.)\*\*\* Does this sound as though the Brief Statement has left this point an open question? Definitely it has taken the position that these are questions answered clearly in Scripture and that we therefore **teach** and **preach** against such opinions as a general conversion of Israel according to the flesh, a special resurrection of a whole class of people such as the martyrs, and that we do not regard these questions as open questions or as theological problems. The same could be said of the other two points concerning which the ALC has likewise taken exception to the Brief Statement.

Until we see a public retraction of the editorial pronouncement which has been made in the matter of these four points, we shall have to consider the matter of the four points from the new angle which has been raised and protest that these four points are not open questions, but that they are closed questions, questions which are definitely and clearly settled by Holy Scripture.

## ❶ Coming Issues

Due to the importance of the present installment of the Rev. J. Buenger's articles and the lack of space the other material promised for this time will appear in the next issue.

Beginning with October we hope to avoid the delay of promised articles by enlarging the issue to 12 pages.

The Confessional Lutheran will in its October issue appropriately present for the earnest consideration of its readers a number of seasonal theses on the subject of union and unionism, which have been written in the spirit of the Reformation that began on October 31st, 1517.

A very fine study of II Tim. 1, 13, "Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words," with reference to the present union movement, by Rev. C. M. Gullerud, pastor of the Missouri Synod congregation at Brookings, S. Dak., will likewise be published in the next issue.

The important series of articles by Rev. J. Buenger will be continued, and it is hoped that the series on Walther's Theses on the Modern Theory of Open Questions, which had to be omitted in this issue, because of lack of space, can again be taken up and brought to an early conclusion.

The next installment on Marxism will discuss the Communistic view of Christian faith and Christian ethics and one or two related subjects.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

\*\*\*What contradictions and confusion the events of 1938 have given rise to within the Missouri Synod. —Editor.

\*\*\*What can be more sure and clear than the revelation of an instantaneous appearance of Christ and an identically instantaneous resurrection of all the dead and transformation of the living at the sound of the last trumpet? Mt. 24, 27; I Cor. 15, 51, 52; I Thess. 4, 14-17.

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V. 1, 10 + 11

CONFESSIO LUTHERANA

# THE CONFESSIO LUTHERANA

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—1 Cor. 1, 10.

BOARD OF EDITORS: Rev. Paul H. Burgdorf, Rev. J. Buenger, Rev. G. Schweickert, Rev. C. M. Gullerud  
Rev. Arthur E. Beck, Managing Editor

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October & November, 1940

No. 10 + 11

IN THIS ISSUE: The A.L.C. Detroit Convention—Shall We Continue Negotiations?—The Dogmatic-Historical Background of the Present Union Movement—Lest We Forget the Language of our Fathers.

## • The A.L.C. Convention At Detroit

The Lutheran Standard, the official organ of the American Lutheran Church, used diplomacy in reporting on the Detroit Convention of the A. L. C. Naturally, the discussion of controverted doctrines was omitted. Without taking time to analyze, let us here only transcribe a few pertinent statements.

"In order to hasten the day of closer union with the United Lutheran Church, our Committee on fellowship with that body was instructed to meet again 'without delay' with the official Committee of the United Lutheran Church."—"That progress has been made in the direction of larger and deeper unity among Lutherans of America is indicated in the very fact that at The Undaunted Convention there were present official visitors both from the Missouri Synod and from the United Lutheran Church in America. That, as Doctor Reu pointed out when he introduced Doctor W. Arndt, one of the official visitors from the Missouri Synod, was really an 'event in the history of the Lutheran Church of our country'."—"The greetings brought to us by Doctors Burgess and Arndt were tenders of fraternity that touched the hearts and formed the basis of unfeigned thanks."—"Prior to the convention most of the questions that had arisen were cleared up, once the language used was fully and correctly understood."—"Little difficulty was therefore experienced in disposing of the first two points included in the statement from the Missouri Synod's Committee for Lutheran Union."—(The other three were just as easily taken care of.)—

"At Detroit we accepted the Pittsburgh agreement, fully convinced that this agreement is in complete harmony with our own 'Declaration' and the Missouri Synod's Brief Statement."—"We encouraged the pastors from the United Lutheran Church and of our own Church to meet in smaller groups to discuss questions of doctrine and practice in order to understand each other better and strengthen their faith." (Lutheran Standard Nov. 9, 1940, pp. 3. 4.)

—A. E. B.

## • The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of The Present Union Movement

With Special Reference to the Specific Doctrines Involved

By Rev. J. Buenger

(Continued)

In the Chicago Antitheses and in the A.L.C. Declaration

### The Doctrine of Conversion

In our last installment in this series of articles we had promised to analyze the Chicago Antitheses on Conversion. This we shall now proceed to do.

#### The Chicago Antitheses on Conversion

It is not the purpose of antitheses to correct possible mistakes in doctrinal theses, but to clinch the argumentation of the theses by rejecting errors opposed to the truths which the theses confess.

We have seen that the Chicago Theses on Conversion instead of stressing the equal guilt (*eadem culpa*) of all hearers of the Gospel over against the grace of God, as the ori-

ginal theses presented by our side had done, now assert an unequal conduct (*dissimilis actio*) of man and hence a comparatively greater guilt on the part of the unconverted over against the grace of God.

Our representative had finally realized that it had been a mistake to sacrifice their original Thesis 10. But they were of the opinion that they were able to grind out the notch in the antitheses which were to follow. Now, if this had been done, theses and antitheses would not agree, but contradict each other. But we shall now examine these antitheses and see whether or not they reject the error which had crept into the theses.

The first part reads:

## II Antitheses

On the basis of this truth we reject as contrary to Scripture and false any teaching by which the utter incapability of all men for anything that is good in a spiritual respect and the monergism of divine grace in the conversion and salvation of men are denied and obscured; we also reject any teaching which finds the ultimate cause of the non-conversion even of a single person in God and His means of grace and which charges Him in any way with the fault of such non-conversion; as, for instance, the teaching—

1) That man by his own natural powers or by powers communicated to him by the grace of God can in any manner omit or diminish his resistance—whether it be of the “natural” or the “wilful” kind—against the gracious operation of God; or that he can in any manner contribute anything to his conversion, cooperate with God towards it, or prepare and make himself fit for the same;

There was absolutely no reason why the representatives of the Ohio and Iowa Synods should not accept this statement. The utter incapacity of all men for anything that is good in a spiritual respect, the monergism of divine grace in conversion were already asserted in the theses which they had presented. Since they ascribe the overcoming of the natural resistance to the Holy Spirit alone and hold that wilful resistance is never overcome, there is not a word in this first section of the antitheses to which they could not have subscribed. The question of the equal or unequal conduct of men over against the grace is not yet touched upon in this paragraph.

Still less important is Paragraph 2, which rejects Latermann's synergism and other expressions which nowadays would hardly be heard in the A.L.C. It reads:

2) That prior to faith man himself, either of his own accord or through powers given to him by grace, can determine to submit to the grace that is to convert him or to allow converting grace to continue its operation upon him. This “decision in favor of God” does not precede conversion (in the strict sense), but is the very conversion which God works.

But the critical moment came when in Paragraph 3 the distinction between the natural and the wilful resistance was touched upon. Here was an opportunity to really hit the opponents' position by rejecting the statement that the wilful resistance constitutes a greater guilt of man or by stating that non-conversion must not be explained by a special kind of resistance. Insistence on such a statement would have brought the negotiations to a crisis. But neither of the two statements was inserted. Paragraph 3 reads:

3) We also reject as false and contrary to Scripture the distinction between natural and wilful resistance for the purpose of offering a uniform explanation why it is that some remain in perdition and are lost while others are converted and saved, though all are equally guilty and maintain only an evil attitude towards the converting grace of God and though grace works with equal power upon all men. By this teaching conversion and salvation are made to depend not on the grace of God alone, but also on man's conduct.

This paragraph offered the greatest difficulties to the colloquists. The earnest endeavor of our committee to ward off any possible infringement upon the *sola gratia* is noticed. They were determined to regain the ground they had lost by the changes made in the theses, while those of the other side were just as determined not to sacrifice any of the advantages they had gained thereby. It will be noticed that Antithesis 3 does not reject the distinction between the natural and the wilful resistance under all circumstances but only if used as a **uniform explanation**. Then all depends on the question: exactly what is meant by this term? Does the distinction as made by the opponents fall under this heading? Antithesis 3 as it reads might be understood as rejecting this distinction, thus contradicting the theses. Therefore the Ohio and Iowa Synods could not accept it without supplementing it in such a manner as to prevent such an interpretation. This supplement is given in a footnote reading thus:

A uniform explanation of conversion and non-conversion is offered by Synergists when they place the cause of both in man. A uniform explanation of conversion and non-conversion is offered by Calvinists when they place the cause of both in God.

But our opponents do neither of these two things. For they place the cause of conversion in God alone who overcomes the natural resistance (but only the natural resistance!) and the cause of non-conversion in man alone who is heaping up guilt by offering the unnecessary wilful resistance.

Our representatives did not hesitate to accept the footnote, for it is correct as far as it goes. Synergism as well as Calvinism offer a uniform explanation of the old question *cur alii prae aliis*. But they failed to see that this very definition by limiting the range of uniform explanations to synergistic and Calvinistic ones offered a loophole to escape the condemnation of the antithesis. That this expression is understood in a different sense from ours by our opponents has been shown before. Conversion is explained by the grace of God alone and only *non-conversion* by the wilful resistance. It might be objected; but by the inequality of human conduct the secret is actually removed at this point, hence this solution may rightly be termed a uniform explanation. However the footnote prevents this by stating that only by placing the cause of both *conversion* and *non-conversion*, either in God or in man a uniform explanation is offered. Thus the expedience to explain conversion by the grace of God alone who overcomes the natural resistance and to explain non-conversion by a worse conduct and greater guilt on the part of the others is not covered by antithesis 3 if considered in the light of the footnote. Hence there is no contradiction but perfect harmony between the thesis and antitheses.

Our committee would have accomplished its purpose by adding that a uniform explanation is offered by explaining *non-conversion* by a special evil conduct involving a greater guilt on the part of man. But this the Ohio and Iowa Synods would not have accepted. Nor would the A.L.C. accept it today. Make the test, whoever has the opportunity. By accepting such a statement and thereby rejecting the unequal conduct of men true unity would be established in the doctrine of conversion.

Antitheses 4-8 are of no special interest in this connection except in one regard. In these five paragraphs Calvinistic views are rejected which have been falsely ascribed to the Synodical Conference. The opponents felt that by rejecting these errors the Synodical Conference would rid itself of false teaching of which it had heretofore been guilty. This, along with similar declarations in the doctrine of predestination made it possible for them to declare the doctrine of the Synodical Conference as correct and to offer us church-fellowship. While they saw very well the differences which still remain, they did not regard them as real doctrinal differences, divisive of church-fellowship; and although they are determined to cling to their way of

teaching, they saw no reason why they should not extend the hand of fellowship to those whom they had, up to that time, shunned as Crypto-Calvinists in the doctrine of conversion and election. Therefore, when we again and again point out the fact that our opponents see to it that their own views must in some manner be expressed in the documents meant as a doctrinal basis for union, this does not necessarily mean that we accuse them of insincerity. It is true that some actions connected with the Chicago Theses are inexcusable, but the mere endeavor to have the "theology" preserved which they have inherited from their fathers does not in itself involve insincerity. As far as their persons are concerned we leave the judgment entirely to God. They may be sincerely convinced of the essential correctness of their own as well as of our doctrine without realizing the deep gulf which is still yawning between the two positions. But it is our duty not to yield at this point but insist that the differences be settled. If our opponents could be made to see that their new mode of teaching, the construing of a special evil conduct to which man is not by nature inclined, is not a harmless theory but a fatal mistake which must be rejected, then the last obstacle of a real and full unity in the doctrine of conversion would be removed. And this is all we want, real doctrinal unity. Is this "narrow and bigoted separatism"?

We should now be ready to consider intelligently the further development of the negotiations between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod as they culminated in the Resolutions of 1938, and specifically in the Declaration of the former body.

### The A.L.C. Declaration on Conversion

If the A.L.C. men today, after dropping the accusation of Calvinism, regard the doctrine of conversion as taught by the Synodical Conference as essentially correct; if they no longer see any divisive differences but only minor discrepancies which may be tolerated; if finally they are convinced that their own mode of presenting the doctrine is preferable to ours and should under all circumstances be upheld, which other alternative did they have but to declare the doctrine itself, as contained in the Brief Statement, correct, but at the same time, just as had been done in the Chicago Theses, to supplement and emphasize certain points which are important to them? This is exactly what they have done in their Declaration, and we shall now consider this Declaration so far as it concerns the doctrine

of salvation.

The second part of the A.L.C. Declaration has the caption "II. Universal Plan of Salvation, Predestination, and Conversion." The words pertaining to the purpose of God to convert men read:

To this end it is His purpose by His Word to work in all men true repentance and creatively to produce saving faith in them, II Cor. 4, 6; Eph. 2, 10; I Pet. 1, 23, not irresistibly but in all cases with the same seriousness and the same power, Luke 14, 23; Is. 55, 10, 11. (Proceedings, p. 222.)

This is what they wish to supplement to our Brief Statement and to emphasize, because it is essential to them. Why was this necessary? It can not truthfully be said that the Brief Statement does not teach a resistible grace. The Brief Statement is very clear at this point. Par. 13 it says: "Many hearers of the Word indeed remain unconverted and are not saved, not because God does not earnestly desire their conversion and salvation, but solely because they stubbornly resist the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost, as Scripture teaches, Acts 7, 51; Mt. 23, 37; Acts 13, 46." A grace which, in spite of its earnestness, is actually frustrated by stubborn resistance of man is certainly a resistible grace.

And again Par. 14: "But any man's non-conversion is due to himself alone: it is the result of his obstinate resistance against the converting operation of the Holy Ghost, Hos. 13, 9." A converting operation of the Holy Ghost which is frustrated by obstinate resistance of man does not work irresistibly.

All that can be said is that the Brief Statement does not use the phrase "grace does not work irresistibly." And for good reasons. Dr. Pieper had a strong aversion for this special expression because for more than half a century it has been constantly misused to cover the false doctrine of an unequal conduct on the part of man. The argumentation has ever been the same. It runs thus: If there were no difference in the conduct of man over against the grace of God, then the grace must work irresistibly or by force in those who are converted. Invariably, therefore, the wilful resistance as the different conduct of man was introduced by a phrase like this: "But the grace does not work irresistibly." Correct as the statement is itself, its constant misuse does not make it advisable to use it when there are other ways to express the same truth. The F.C. in its long and extended "Thorough Declaration" of its second article does not use this expression. Why then brand it as a defect when a brief and comprehensive statement for good reasons

expresses the same truth in other words, avoiding the much misused phrase?

The only reason for stressing and emphasizing the irresistibility of God's grace beyond that which is clearly said in the Brief Statement can be the opinion that by this expression the different conduct which has always been so important to Ohio and Iowa, and now to the A.L.C., is thereby safeguarded. Or is there any indication in the A.L.C. Declaration that they have now abandoned this special feature of their teaching?

We are told that the A.L.C. representatives have accepted our Brief Statement and therefore with the rejection of this error. If they really have done this we should be satisfied as far as this point is concerned. But unfortunately they have never done it. Never and nowhere do the A.L.C. representatives declare that they accept the Brief Statement in its entirety (except some specified points) as their own confession; but very cautiously they say they "believe that in regard to the points touched upon in Section I-IV the doctrines stated in the Brief Statement are correct." There is a great difference between admitting that the doctrines contained in a certain document may be correct, and accepting everything that is said in it.

Another circumstance of importance has never found sufficient attention in our synod. The Iowa Synod, from the days of Loehle, and now the A.L.C., have an altogether different conception of the term "theology" from that of the orthodox Lutheran usage. We shall have occasion later on to furnish the evidence for this. Whoever is acquainted with the distinction they make between a doctrine proper and additional "theological" developments of it sees at a glance that the A.L.C. Declaration leaves a wide margin for disagreement in a sphere which to us is doctrine but to them "theology." No doubt the A.L.C. representatives believe that as far as doctrine proper goes the statements made in our synodical confession are correct. But what about certain assertions which may go beyond what they consider to be doctrine in the strict sense of the word? What about certain distinctions which now may be regarded as "theological explanations"? Do these perhaps belong to a sphere in which each side is left at liberty to cling to their own tenants? These questions must be clarified before doctrinal unity can be declared.

Here it does not help matters to say: We must trust these men and assume that they really mean what they say. Of course, they

mean what they say. But will they feel in duty bound to instruct us about their phraseology and certain distinctions which are rather unknown in our circles? It is for us to make ourselves familiar with their terminology and "theology" and to examine whether their declarations are satisfactory even if their way of thinking and distinguishing is taken into consideration. This is not sinful mistrust and a breaking of the eighth commandment, but our plain duty.

Doing this, we see that there is nothing in their declaration to show that the A.L.C. has abandoned the false idea of an unequal conduct of men over against the divine grace in the Gospel. On the contrary, the indications are that this feature is still essential to them and that for this reason they found it necessary to supplement the Brief Statement by an express assertion that the grace of God does not work irresistably, but in all cases with the same seriousness and the same power. For this truth has always been misused by them to argue thus: Since the cause of the different result does not lie in God it must lie in the conduct of man. Where else could it lie?

If this matter is not settled by an unequivocal statement, there is no doctrinal unity, no basis for a union, as far as the doctrine of conversion is concerned, but only a unionistic agreement which permits either side to cling to its own position.

Let the A.L.C. declare that the equal guilt of man does not only pertain to the so-called natural resistance, but also to the wilful resistance; that, therefore, no unequal conduct of men is to be stated and that the mystery lies in the fact that one man is lost on account of his resistance while another, although guilty of the same resistance, is converted and saved. So simple would be the adjustment of the present difficulty if it were true that real unity in this doctrine exists.

But if our opponents are not ready to make such a declaration, because they are not yet convinced of its truth, should not this result at least settle the dispute in our own midst? Or are there such among us as would have church fellowship with the A.L.C. established in spite of this doctrinal difference?

At the jubilee synod in St. Louis in 1872 Dr. Walther predicted that a great conflict would yet have to be waged if the truth was to be preserved in the Lutheran Church. (Hochstetter, p. 322.) This great conflict began seven years later when the controversy

regarding the doctrine of conversion and election broke out. Since that time more than sixty years have passed. The truth of the position which the Synodical Conference has taken has become more and more evident, but the error is not yet fully overcome. Shall the conflict now end in a deadlock because both sides are tired of fighting it through to the end? This will certainly not happen. Even if a majority of our synod should succeed in entering a union without having the main difference definitely settled the old controversy would flare up anew, and many who up to this time have been on the side of the old Lutheran truth would be surprised to find themselves in the opposite camp. May God prevent such a calamity. Let us hasten to repair this breach in our synod before it is too late.

(To be Continued)

## ● Shall We Continue Negotiations?

There are those among us who are of the firm conviction that we must by all means continue to deal with the other Lutheran bodies in order to achieve unity. They feel that our Norwegian and Wisconsin Synods are separatistically inclined by refusing negotiations, especially since one of them has publicly and officially declared that in the light of present developments a continuation would be tantamount to a "denial of the truth." They insist that we must at least be open minded enough to meet with the clergy of the other Lutheran Synods to discuss the differences and see to what extent unity has been and can be attained.

In order to properly understand the above question and find a God-pleasing solution it is necessary that we keep in mind two important facts: 1) that by the grace of God we are the stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Cor. 4, 1); and 2) that in the last times there will be a falling away. (2 Thess 2, 3).

The faithful steward of God's mysteries is dedicated to the preservation and the proper dissemination of the pure Word of God and the administration of the unadulterated sacraments. A costly diamond is not carelessly displayed to curiosity seekers, but is carefully guarded. We are stewards of treasures that have been given to us by God Himself through His holy inspired writers, sealed by the blood of His only begotten Son. It is solely by the grace of God that we have been chosen as caretakers of the priceless jewel of the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. As caretakers we



have definite regulations to follow. At times our reason will rebel and try to find loop holes in the immense stone wall that God has built for the preservation of His Word. "Avoid them", "touch not the unclean thing", "beware", "watch" are so many sentinels calling out in clarion tone the warning that those who wish to rob us of our precious heritage are constantly attacking us.

And these strict laws for the preservation of the Truth are no indication that our God is a tyrant who has pleasure in being severe with His children, but rather they are made "in the interest of His unspeakable divine love and mercy, which would lead us poor sinners to salvation." (Pieper, "Unionism" p. 7).

We are told that we have a definite command to continue negotiations in the words of Peter: "Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1 Pet. 3. 15). We humbly accept this advice of the inspired apostle and pray God that we will always be willing to give reason of the hope that is in us to whatever person that might ask us, whether he be Catholic or Mohammedan or Lutheran. But to apply this passage to negotiations that are being carried on between two large church bodies who have been in controversy for decades, we term as a misapplication of Scripture. Furthermore, to appoint committees to carry on negotiations and draw up documents before agreement has been reached and then to use every persuasive effort to have this document accepted by every member of both church bodies is placing the cart before the horse. The sensible and God-pleasing thing to do is, if there are those among the other Lutherans who come to us and by repudiating former ways show us there is unity, that then a committee be appointed to draw up the necessary document. And we can assure you that there will be no trouble in having the document accepted.

To argue that the other body might have been right and that our fathers might have been wrong, is a violation of our divine stewardship. "2 Tim. 3, 14; John 8, 31; Eph. 4, 14; Col. 2, 7 condemn the spirit of doctrinal uncertainty and instability and call for this mind: 'We are sure concerning our doctrine and confession. That godly confession built upon the solid testimonies of truth, which cannot be shaken.'" (Preface, Book of Concord p. 9. 21). Luther tells us in his essay on Free Will: "The Holy Ghost is no skeptic who has written in our hearts doubt, but firm convictions more sure and sound than life and all experiences." (Luther 18, 1680. Also compare Dr. Engelder's 1940 Class Notes on "Unionism". P. 12).

There is a reluctance on the part of many among us to ask those who seek union with us, to publicly renounce their former errors. They insist that we cannot hold the present generation responsible for the errors of years past. They tell us that these men who come to us have a more conservative and confessional stand than their fathers.

Two publications by two of the A.L.C. leading theologians: "The Spirit of the American Lutheran Church" and "In the interest of Lutheran Unity" published this year prove that many of the old errors are defended today and in many cases they have become more unionistic in the present generation than a few decades before.

The unwillingness to publicly withdraw former errors is an indication of their unionistic pride. And our hesitating in demanding open retraction is a sign of our unfaithfulness as stewards of the holy Gospel. God's word demands retraction of every error (1 John 1, 8. 9; Prov. 28, 13). If we are to remain faithful in our stewardship we must do likewise. (James 5, 16; Matt. 5, 23. 24).

We are easily swept away in our enthusiasm for negotiating (Luth. Wit. 1940 P. 380) by the **apparent progress** in the present union movement. But Church union movements and **apparent progress** are nothing new in the history of the church. As it is the case in the present endeavors so it has been at all times, namely, that these movements are not inaugurated by the orthodox, but rather by the heterodox group. (This in itself is a warning). Prof. Hoyer, professor of Church History at our St. Louis Seminary, tells us concerning the movement which led to the Nicene Council: "The orthodox party, did not initiate the move for union. It originated with the emperor." (Syn. Conf. Proc. 1936, P. 24). With regard to the movement that led to the Colloquy of Marburg, he states: "the two men who stood behind it, Philip of Hesse and Zwingli, were actuated chiefly by political motives." (Syn. Conf. Proc. 1936, P. 30). When writing on the union movement between Henry VIII and the Lutherans, Hoyer states: "they did not inaugurate the move for union. They did not consider it their duty to run around looking for alliances with other organizations. Their duty, in their conception, was to speak the truth of Christ clearly and boldly, in season and out of season, to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints; but when others persistently differed with them and caused divisions contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, they follow the apostolic direction 'Avoid them'." (Syn. Conf. Proc. 1936, P. 45).

Someone might here object that this union movement today is entirely different, because it only concerns those bodies that call themselves Lutheran and can more readily be compared to the time when the Formula of Concord healed the dissensions in the Lutheran body. (*The Am. Luth. Jan. 1940, P. 6*). In answer one fact must be kept in mind that prior to the formation of the Formula of Concord the divisions had not reached the point where the parties refused fellowship with one another, but rather it is to be compared with the dissensions found in our own Missouri Synod today. (*Cone. Triglott. P. 235-256*). Another Formula of Concord might help to bring unity in our own Synod. God grant it.

Glancing through the history of **the Lutheran bodies** we find that also here, these union movements are nothing new. In the middle of the 19th Century, about a hundred years ago, a movement was begun by S. S. Schmucker, B. Kurtz and S. Sprecher called "American Lutheranism." "The champions of this movement called the champions of the Lutheran Confessions 'Symbolists' and pictured them as 'extremists of the most dangerous sort' . . . It was the reaction against the confessionalism of Tennessee Synod and the Missouri Synod . . . Though decrying the Lutheran Confessions, the leaders of the movement proposed a 'Definite Platform' as a confession of faith on which they hoped to unite the Lutheran Church of America. The movement finally led to the disruption of the General Synod in 1866, but its spirit still survives in some quarters of the twentieth century." (*Con. Cycl. P. 18*).

Again someone might interrupt and say that the picture has changed today, since the ones with whom we are dealing are no longer decrying the Lutheran Confessions, but in their very constitutions have accepted them.

But we answer it is one thing to accept our confessions, it is quite another when in their practice they act differently. Dr Pieper warns: "Anti-biblical Unionism is in evidence when a church body does, in its constitution, subscribe to the Confessions of the orthodox (i. e., the Lutheran) Church, but when, at the same time, it lets false teachers go unchallenged." (Pieper, "Unionism" P. 38). It is pertinent to note here what Dr. Wm. Sihler stated before the Synodical Conference in 1876 concerning the General Council which claimed to have a "strictly Lutheran **Confessional Basis**" (*Cp. Cone. Cycl. P. 280*): "The Lutherans in the Prussian Union say themselves that they are unionists (unirt), while the General Council calls itself Lutheran . . .

The former are still honest, but the Council calls itself Lutheran and is in truth nothing else than unionistic (unirt)." (*Proc. 1876, P. 26*).

In the light of official publications the same deduction can be made in this year 1940 concerning the American Lutheran Church. The following two excerpts should remove all doubts with regard to the purpose of the A.L.C. wishing to unite with the Missouri Synod. Their chief aim is that of the middle-of-the-road group of trying to unite all Lutherans without demanding retraction of error (*Luth. Wit. 1938, P. 373*). Dr Poppen, Pres. of the A.L.C. in his 1940 annual report stated:

"Although there are no outstanding developments in the negotiations toward church fellowship with other Lutheran bodies (notably, the Missouri Synod and the United Lutheran Church), free conferences have been held during the past year in many sections, in which our own pastors met with the pastors of the U.L.C.A. and of the Missouri Synod. As a rule, the results of these meetings were encouraging, **good will and better understanding were promoted.** (emphasis ours). The so-called 'Pittsburgh Agreement' between the Fellowship Commissions of the U.L.C.A. and the American Lutheran Church will be submitted to the general conventions or both synodical bodies in October of this year."\* (*Lutheran Standard, Mar. 30, 1940, P. 6*).

Dr. P. Buehring, member of the A.L.C. commission on union, writes in his book "The Spirit of the American Lutheran Church":

"In the meantime, too, we have not been idle in our endeavors to establish closer fraternal relations with Lutheran church bodies with whom as yet we are not in church fellowship. Standing commissions have met in conference with similar commissions of the Missouri Synod and the United Lutheran Church in America. Our negotiations with the former by 1938 has reached the point where the general conventions of both bodies could officially declare that a sufficient doctrinal basis for the future establishment of church fellowship had been established, and thus a controversy extending over a period of more than sixty years bids fair to come to a close. Our commission negotiating with representatives of the United Lutheran Church has likewise come to an agreement with them, and their joint report will no doubt be submitted to the general conventions of both church bodies in 1940 for final action." (P. 106).

While it is true that we must deal with those who come to us and ask for the reason of the hope that is within us, yet when it is evident that they do not seek the truth but try to convince us that their sinful unionism must be tolerated as we experienced in one of the free conferences in May, then it is high time that we follow the apostolic injunction of

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\* The Pittsburgh Agreement was adopted by both bodies in their recent conventions in October.

"avoid them." Under these conditions we dare not continue negotiations.

If there are any among us who in the light of the Sandusky resolutions, the Pittsburgh Agreement and many of the free conferences, are still looking forward to a union of all who call themselves Lutheran, we urge them as soon as possible to drop this millennialistic and zionistic hope. The Scriptures no place assure us that in the last times there will be large church bodies turning from their errors to the Truth, but rather warns that there will be a "falling away." (2, Thes. 2, 3). Keeping this scriptural truth in mind it is indeed necessary that under the present circumstances all negotiations, with other Lutheran Bodies with which we are not in agreement, cease. That first of all every effort be made through conferences of restoring the unity of faith in our own midst, that we all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among us; but that we be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement. (1 Cor. 1, 10.)

—A. E. B.

## ● Lest We Forget The Language Of Our Fathers

In a sermon delivered to his congregation in 1884 based on Eph. 4, 1-6 Dr. Walther states: "Unity of love without unity of faith is like a tree without root, that will soon die. On the other hand, unity of faith without unity of love is like a tree that brings forth no fruit, which must be hewn down and cast into the fire." (Hom. Mag. Vol. VII, p. 297.)

\* \* \* \*

In the same sermon Walther warns: "Let us not give the hand of fellowship to the false faith, even if it is garbed in angelic holiness. The truth is not ours, but belongs to God. The truth is not debatable, nor is it to be surrendered. First let us preserve the truth for God's glory, and on this basis we must seek peace with our fellowmen. The peace between fellowmen dare not rule or direct divine truth, but truth must rule and direct the peace." (Ibid.)

\* \* \* \*

"How often did not our Savior and the apostles enter the arena with their opponents, were able to stop their mouths, and yet were unable to persuade them to leave their errors and accept the truth." (S. in L.u.W. Vol. 20, P. 7).

\* \* \* \*

"Every interpretation which harms the doctrine of the resurrection of all dead, the expected coming of Christ to final judgment

as the only to-be-expected visible appearance of Christ, the spiritual nature and suffering of the church till the end of time, the spiritual upbuilding of the church and her members alone through the Gospel, or any other article of faith, they recognized absolutely as false. Whosoever did not agree with them in these they refused church fellowship." (Dr. A. L. Graebner in L.u.W. Vol. XLVII, P. 268. in an article titled: "Die Stellung unserer Vaeter zu Offenb. Joh. 20.")

\* \* \* \*

Luther writes: "The purpose of the highly-honored scholarly theology of today is not to defend the old faith against new heresy, but rather to harmonize Christianity with the progressive religious element of the day." (Quoted in L.u.W. Vol. 20, P. 1).

\* \* \* \*

"Even upright lovers of the truth of today are infected with a unionistic soft-heartedness in that they think that error and errorists are not to be attacked *ex professo*, but that it will suffice when positive testimony is indirectly given over against error." (S. in L.u.W. Vol. 20, P. 1.)

\* \* \* \*

"In their relation to the errorists the unionistic spirits of the day have indeed a tender hearted feeling over towards their fellowmen, but they lack the spiritually tender conscience over towards the strict command of God." (ibid. P. 2.)

\* \* \* \*

"Soon after the Apostles had founded their congregations 'many false prophets' (1 John 4, 1) and 'many antichrists' (1 John 2, 18) . . . already during the lifetime of the apostles miserably raised havoc with the church." (ibid. p. 4).

—A. E. B.

## EXPLAINING THE DELAY

Due to the moving of our editor to Clinton, Iowa, unforeseen obstacles arose which delayed the publication of The Confessional Lutheran. The October and November issues have been combined. Two more men have been added to the staff in order to forestall any repetition of this delay or the necessity of combining two issues. The twelve pages promised for the October Number, God willing, shall be forthcoming in December.

—A. E. B.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**

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# THE CONFESSIONAL LUTHERAN

Published In The Interest Of Ecumenical Lutheranism

MOTTO: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."—1 Cor. 1, 10.

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IN THIS ISSUE: Hold fast the Form of Sound Words—Let Us Be Charitable—Inter-Synodical Conference at Rochelle, Ill.—Romans 16, 17, 18—Unanimous Union—The Dogmatic-Historic Background of the Present Union Movement.

## ● "Hold Fast The Form of Sound Words"

### II Tim. 1, 13

When, in the settlement of controversy, the question of phraseology or mode of expression in doctrinal statements comes up for consideration, it will be fruitful to turn to the fathers and learn from them what the soundly Lutheran attitude has been in this matter. This need becomes all the more apparent when we note that in some quarters the lack of **exact, adequate** expression and the lack of **specific, unqualified** retraction of errors is not considered to be such a serious deficiency in documents designed for the settlement of past controversies.

Though there may be those who insist that present-day circumstances and historical developments render unnecessary and unacceptable the application of certain demands which have been insisted upon by the fathers in past times of controversy, we hold that there is a great need to hark back to the early days of our Lutheran Church and see how exceedingly critical the fathers were of the expressions advanced by opponents to satisfy their objections,—objections which have been raised against the orthodoxy of others. Thus in the Majoristic Controversy, when Melancthon advanced the phrase "good works are necessary to salvation," the fathers were not satisfied even though he repeatedly disowned the proposition which he had introduced. Why were they not satisfied? For this reason that he rejected the proposition **merely** because it

was subject to abuse and misapprehension, and refused to reject it because it was in itself an erroneous and false statement. When Major, a pupil of Melancthon, stepped forth as a champion of the Melancthonian proposition, he came with many explanations to show that the controverted phrase was not intended to teach that salvation is earned by works or to deny that salvation is by faith alone, but was simply used to guard against the false impression that some people have who consider that faith may exist without good works. With such explanations one might be tempted to be satisfied and drop the whole matter. But not so the fathers. For they continued to oppose Major. Major was opposed by such men as Amsdorf, Flacius, and Chemnitz and by practically all Lutheran ministers and theologians everywhere. We are told: "Flacius showed that Major's proposition, taken as it reads, can be interpreted only in a papistical sense and that no amount of explanation is able to cure it of its ingrained falsity. Major, said he, must choose between his proposition, or the interpretations which he places upon it. For the former does not admit of the latter. He added that a proposition which is in constant need of explanation in order not to be misunderstood is not adapted for religious instruction." (*Triglot Concordia*, Hist. Intr., p. 119.) Later on Major made certain concessions in which he showed that he was "willing to abandon as dangerous and ambiguous, and to abstain from the use of the formula 'good works are necessary to salvation' but refused to reject it as false and to make a public admission and confession of his

error. The latter, however, was precisely what his opponents demanded; for they were convinced that they could be satisfied with nothing less. As a result the controversy continued until Major's death, in 1574." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 120.) This controversy gave rise to the Fourth Article of the Thorough Declaration of the Formula of Concord where this expression, regardless of the many explanations which had been made, is flatly rejected as inherently false and where it is stated as a settled matter that such modes of expression should be cast out of the churches and repudiated as false and incorrect. This was the unqualified position of the formulators of this Confession. Even though it was admitted that pure teachers before the Majoristic Controversy, had used similar expressions without intending to give sanctuary to papistic errors, yet they say: "Since afterwards a controversy arose concerning such expressions from which all sorts of offensive distractions (debates, offenses, and dissensions) followed, it is safest of all, according to the admonition of St. Paul II Tim. 1, 13, to hold fast as well to the form of sound words as to the pure doctrine itself, whereby much unnecessary wrangling may be cut off and the Church preserved from many scandals." (Thorough Declaration, Art. IV, F. C.; **Triglot Concordia**, p. 949.)

Thus the fathers and formulators of our Confessions give us some valuable instruction as to what demands should be made of opponents with regard to the use of certain modes of expression and with regard to the need of unqualified rejection of former errors and public admission of the same, without which we cannot be satisfied that any controversy has been satisfactorily settled. To be satisfied with statements to the effect that certain phrases are subject to abuse and misunderstanding and on that account are advised against, is to be satisfied with less than the fathers were satisfied with when certain expressions had been drawn into controversy. To be satisfied with explanations which seem to render certain phrases innocuous is to lay down the cudgels where our fathers took them up (as when, for example, they wrote the Thorough Declaration, Art. IV, after many explanations and concessions had been made to satisfy the objections to certain modes of expression.) What we must demand is that phrases and expressions which have been used to give sanctuary to false doctrine must be rejected and repudiated as being **false** and **incorrect**. In doing so we are following the example set for us in our own Confessional writings.

—C. M. G.

## ● Let Us Be Charitable

The Bible extols charity as the highest virtue (I Cor. 13, 13) and admonishes us to "follow after" the same (I Cor. 14, 1). Therefore, we conclude with the Bible that all of our things are to be done with charity (I Cor. 16, 14). This exhortation of the Scriptures includes, of course, the injunction to be charitable also in the Lutheran union problem. We, who are opposed to the present basis (St. Louis Union Articles of 1938) for union with the A. L. C., honestly believe that we are charitable. But also those within and without the Missouri Synod who favor union on the present basis evidently believe that they are charitable. Here we have an example of two parties appealing to the same virtue and yet not reaching the same conclusion. Why is this? Do they perhaps differ in their idea of charity? The arrival at contradictory conclusions regarding union may be due to this very thing.

Hence, what is charity? Webster defines charity as "Christian love and benevolence" and "liberality in judging men and actions." According to the Bible charity is love and manifests itself by putting the best construction on everything. Or, we may say that love seeks the highest good or welfare in both spiritual and material things for both him who loves and for him who is loved.

Now, unionists also stress charity (love) and emphasize that they put the best construction on everything. But is true charity according to the Bible at work when a union is to be brought about which, because it is not founded on true and one-hundred-percent unity in doctrine and practice, cannot make for the highest good in spiritual things for both him who is charitable and the recipient of the charity? The Bible says (Gal. 5, 9), and the history of the Church proves, that the toleration of errors, either few or many, large or small, does not bring about good but rather evil. Hence, unionistic charity is not true charity.

The Synodical Conference believes that it teaches the Word of God in its truth and purity and is truly Evangelical Lutheran. And surely those of the Missouri Synod who favor union with the A. L. C. on the basis of the St. Louis Union Articles of 1938 believe that the Synodical Conference has the true light. But are those who favor union with the A. L. C. on the basis of the unacceptable and untenable resolutions of 1938 charitable? Is it true charity to leave the A. L. C. in partial darkness? We have been told that the

A. L. C. wants to be enlightened and their request as well as true charity compel us to give them the true light. But when it is stated that certain errors "need not be divisive" of fellowship and when this has since been developed into "are not divisive", true charity has been extinguished and unionistic charity holds sway. This kind of charity is satisfied with a church which is less than one hundred percent doctrinally pure. Such false charity can only make for evil as the Scripture and Church history attest.

We have the utmost confidence in the power of God's Word and will rely upon the same to win all of the A. L. C., and even others entirely. But we will never rely upon agreements which tolerate errors declaring them to be non-divisive of fellowship. For if we were to do so, we would be uncharitable. Let us be truly charitable to ourselves, our posterity, and those whom we are trying to gain, by requiring a God-directed and God-pleasing union in doctrine and practice and thereby work for our highest spiritual good and the glory of God.

Harry H. Smith,  
Brownsville, Texas

## ● Inter-Synodical Conference At Rochelle, Ill.

(Missouri Synod and A. L. C.)

### "Missouri No Longer Occupies the Position Held by it Formerly."

"Through the adoption of the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 it has become clear that Missouri no longer occupies the position held by it formerly, according to which one can demand that there be complete doctrinal agreement." With this statement Dr. M. Reu brought to a close his remarks in the interest of Lutheran union at a conference of Missouri Synod and A. L. C. pastors at Rochelle, Ill., on October 28.

Dr. Reu had been invited to present an essay at this conference. But since he had just come from Detroit, where he had taken a prominent part in the convention of the American Lutheran Church, he was asked to present a report on this convention. Dr. Reu's report, to which the forenoon was devoted, dealt with questions of the relationship of the A. L. C. toward the Missouri Synod, the American Lutheran Conference, and the United Lutheran Church.

Regarding the relationship of the A. L. C. to the U. L. C. Dr. Reu reported that the Pittsburgh agreement (between representa-

tives of the A. L. C. and the U. L. C.) which had caused so much misgiving within the ranks of the Missouri Synod had been ratified.

Discussion of the question of the relationship of the A. L. C. toward other churches of the American Lutheran Conference was occasioned by Missouri's concern over the statement contained in the Sandusky Resolutions according to which the A. L. C. is not willing to give up its membership in the American Lutheran Conference. The A. L. C. went on record as stating that it is confident that the American Lutheran Conference will occupy the same ground which the A. L. C. occupies. Rev. F. H. Brunn, secretary of the Missouri Synod Union Committee, Dr. Theo. Dierks, and the writer asked for a further explanation of this statement. This discussion finally led to the straightforward question by Pastor Brunn: does this mean that the A. L. C. is in doctrinal and practical agreement with the American Lutheran Conference? The answer given by Dr. Reu was: "Yes."

Regarding the relationship of the A. L. C. toward the Missouri Synod, and specifically the disposition of several questions which had been brought to its attention by the Missouri Synod's Union Committee as constituting obstacles in the way of union, Dr. Reu reported that the A. L. C. had not accepted Missouri's Brief Statement. It had accepted portions of it (the Five Points) only with the limitations of the A. L. C. Declaration. Beyond this, and other supplementations and emphases, it is "conscious of being in agreement" with other doctrines of the Brief Statement (note that it does not say it accepts even these) but not with all "points" of it. That the A. L. C. has quite a different conception of "doctrine" from that which the Missouri Synod has, is of course very important to remember here. With regard to the question of the divisiveness of Christian doctrine it was stated that not every traditional explanation of Scripture is binding, the plain implication being that it is no more than a traditional explanation of Scripture rather than Scripture itself that Missouri stands for in some of its doctrines, as contained in the Brief Statement. Dr. Reu's report on the sentence objected to by Missourians in the Declaration, namely that God "purposes to justify those who have come to faith," showed that the A. L. C. confused objective and subjective justification. For Dr. Reu reported that it is the view of the A. L. C. that "the declarative aspect" of objective justification takes place when the individual comes to faith. The

tenor of Dr. Reu's remarks in general was to the effect that Missouri simply fails to "understand" the A. L. C.'s position, but that it is hoped that Missourians will "in the light of the Declaration" by and by begin to see more clearly than they do now. Therein lies the great hope of the A. L. C. for union with Missouri.

### Romans 16, 17

The afternoon was devoted to Dr. Reu's reading of his essay on prayer-fellowship, as it is found in the tract "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity," published by the A. L. C., 1940, pp. 38ff. Discussion centered chiefly about Romans 16, 17. In the fashion of Zwingli at Marburg Dr. Reu emasculated the Scriptures, and disposed of Romans 16, 17 by substituting in its place his own eisegetical **interpretation** of it. As can be seen from his published essay, p. 40, he says that "The Apostle admonishes the Christians at Rome to mark, i. e. carefully to watch those who **seek** to arouse divisions and 'skandala' which are contrary to the doctrine which they have learned." (This the Apostle of course does not do. He simply warns against those **who cause** divisions and offenses.) Dr. Reu next restricts the doctrine which the Romans had learned, a compendium of which is contained in the Apostle's Letter to the Romans itself, to just one doctrine, namely that of justification by faith, leaving the door to prayer-fellowship even with Reformed sectarians open to him, as he expressly states. He also restricts the passage in other ways. (Even within the ranks of the A. L. C. itself there arises the warning voice of Lenski against just such an abuse of Scripture. This noted commentator asks theologians of the stamp of Dr. Reu to give up the effort to try to make of the Apostle Paul even a mild unionist.)

Before excusing himself to keep another appointment, Dr. Reu hurriedly read the terrible unionistic appeal to Missourians which is found on page 37ff. of his tract "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity." It was at this point that he finally made the remark already quoted in part, which ought to blast every Missourian loose from any position of false security: "Through the adoption of the St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 it has become clear that Missouri no longer occupies the position formerly held by it, according to which one can demand complete doctrinal agreement. Brethren, you are not one yourself.\* Away with that terrible spectre!"\*\*

Considerable impatience and resentment

\* This with much pathos and emphasis.

\*\* With still more feeling and force. "Weg mit dem Schreckgespenst!"

manifested itself on the part of A. L. C. men when the errors of Dr. Reu were pointed out at this conference. Their sentiment, as expressed by one of their spokesmen was: "We have come here to hear Dr. Reu." They did not seem interested in seeing Dr. Reu's essay discussed, with a view toward removing doctrinal and practical differences which exist between Missouri and the A. L. C. At the conclusion of the meeting one of the few men of their number who had remained to the end ventured the statement that as far as the A. L. C. men are concerned he thought they were through with inter-synodical meetings. Another one of their number suggested that we should find out that we are agreed on so many points of doctrine that we can afford to disagree on others and that a committee, the appointment of which had been suggested, might steer discussions in that direction. A motion to continue to hold meetings in the future, made and supported by a number of Missourians, carried the day, with a few dissenting votes.

As we reflect on this meeting we once more ask the pertinent question which we asked in reporting a similar previous meeting: How long are our Missourian leaders going to continue to encourage us to carry on the farce of having perverters of the Scripture like Dr. Reu come into our midst and cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, under the pretext that **we are to carry our treasures to others?** If any one thing is becoming more and more increasingly clear in the present union movement it is the obvious fact that the Missouri Synod is to be "united to pieces" if Dr. Reu, the A. L. C. Declaration which he and others wrote, and the St. Louis Resolutions in which it is embodied as the very heart of our mistaken basis for union (at least so far as the A. L. C. is concerned) are to have their way.

**The St. Louis Resolutions of 1938 must be rescinded!**

—P. H. B.

### ROMANS 16, 17.18

## ● A Forceful Testimony Against Perverters of The Scriptures

In the above report on the inter-synodical conference (Missouri Synod—A. L. C.) at Rochelle, Ill., we have referred to the emasculation of Romans, 16, 17ff. by the American Lutheran Church in the interest of its unionism, in its official appeal to the Missouri Synod, "In the Interest of Lutheran Unity,"



by Dr. Reu. (L.B.C., 1940.) We also referred to Dr. Lenski's denunciation of such perversions of Scripture, in his commentary on St. Paul's great Epistle. We herewith cite two pertinent passages from Dr. Lenski's commentary. His words need no comment, except perhaps this, that they incidentally contain, a good, concise definition of unionism—"fraternization with errorists."

"These verses reveal the true nature of all false teaching. They deserve more attention than they often receive. Verse 17 is one of the **sedes\*** against unionism, fraternization with errorists. The entire paragraph should be used. The efforts to make Paul's words apply only to the most fundamental errors, like the denial of Christ's deity, atonement, Incarnation, resurrection, leaves the door open to a host of other errors as though these are not to be stamped out. Paul's para\*\* in v. 17. covers all errors. Paul says the seamless garment of the divine didache\*\*\* is not even to be frayed or snagged by some errorist who acts as Satan's finger." (P. 924.)

"Paul's admonition is devitalized in its application to us today by a specious use of the historical principle of interpretation. Who were 'those causing the divisions' etc.? In the first place, the well-known Judaizers, who mixed law with Gospel; then, as First Corinthians shows, a number of others, some with philosophical, some with false moral teaching. Now it is insisted that Paul's words can be applied only to these errors, and that today we cannot invoke Paul's admonition unless we are able to point to exact duplicates of these errors. Generally the case is narrowed down to the Judaizers of Paul's day, who demanded circumcision and observance of Jewish ceremonialism. And even these are painted in pure black, as men who rejected the entire Gospel. But look at those Judaizers mentioned in Acts 15, 5: 'certain of the sect of the Pharisees **which believed,**' former Pharisees, now believers, yet errorists. In Jerusalem they dropped their error, in Galatia some appeared as separatists to divide the churches and to draw them into their separatism. He who knows his Bible will not be deceived. Paul's injunction is not to keep away only from total rejectors of the Gospel—what Christians ever needed such a warning? His injunction is to keep away from believers who are errorists and teach falsely. Not only the exact duplicates of the errorists of Paul's day are to be shunned, as though no new ones could arise, as though new ones do not divide, tear, and set traps, as though all errorists new and old, great and small,

are not related, all in the same class; but, according to Paul himself (15, 4), 'whatever things were written before, for our instruction were they written,' to be fully applied, not devitalized, evaded. Give up the effort to make Paul even a mild unionist." (p. 918ff.)

—P. H. B.

## • The Dogmatic-Historical Background Of The Present Union Movement With Special Reference to the Specific Doctrines Involved

By Rev. J. Buenger

(Continued)

### 2. Predestination

According to Scripture there are two distinct truths which God has revealed to us in His Word and which we must confess:

1. That God from eternity has in Christ loved all men and that He sends His Word and Spirit with the earnest desire that all men may thereby be converted and saved. This will of God is as universal as the redemption of the world.

2. That God, on the basis of this eternal and universal love in Christ, has before the time of the world out of pure grace elected or predestinated to eternal salvation a certain number of men, and that this eternal, unchangeable decree of God to lead them to eternal life will infallibly be carried out in all the elect in a certain order of salvation (call, conversion, justification, preservation in faith, and glorification).

The first is the universal will of grace; the second is the eternal predestination.

All Calvinism as well as all synergism and similar errors are absolutely excluded when these two revealed truths are adhered to without restriction of any kind.

In connection with the doctrine of predestination, the question has often been raised; Which is the proper way for a theologian to present this doctrine, and for a Christian to apply this revealed truth to himself for his own salvation?

Answer: Since predestination is not a cold Calvinistic decision that some men shall be saved and some lost, but is based on God's eternal love of all men and includes the general order of salvation, it may be rightly contemplated and presented only in connection with God's universal will of love and the order of salvation as shown in detail in the well-known eight points of the Formula of Concord. (Trigl. p. 1069.)

This has always been the position of the Missouri Synod and of the Synodical Con-

\* Seats of doctrine. \*\*"Contrary." \*\*\* "Doctrine."

ference. It is the doctrine which Dr. Walther always taught and which is found in the Brief Statement.

However, there is one feature in this position which has ever been a stumbling block to a certain class of theologians, in the ancient Christian Church, at the time of the Reformation, and also in our time. It is this: If all men are by nature equally corrupt and the love of God in an equal measure extends over all men, there seems to be no reason why only a certain number of men should be elected, converted, and saved. The fact that only comparatively few are elected seems to indicate that there must be a difference either in the will of God toward men or in the conduct of man over against the saving grace of God. But either one of these two expedients is an unscriptural human invention. Nevertheless, theologians have tried untiringly to evade the difficulty in one or the other of these two directions.

The Synodical Conference, fully conscious of the gap which here remains for our understanding, has unrelentingly resisted every attempt at supplying by human speculation what God has not revealed to us, while the Ohio and Iowa Synods, accusing us of teaching Calvinism, contradictory wills in God, etc., declared that it is simply impossible to believe both statements at the same time, since they contradict each other, which, however, has never been proved and certainly is not true. Throughout the whole controversy, the part which these two Synods played has been a long chain of attempts at evading the above-mentioned difficulty, first by synergistic conceptions of man's conduct over against the grace of God, then later on by a certain attenuation of the Scripture doctrine of fallen man's depravity, as shown in our former chapter on Conversion. (See July and August, 1940, issues of **The Confessional Lutheran**.)

Now before we can enter into a discussion of the doctrinal difference involved in regard to predestination, it will be necessary precisely to define certain terms which have always been used in this connection, the terms "will", "purpose", "decree", and "counsel".

As to the Scriptural use of the first three, B. Meisner writes: "There is a distinction to be made between the will of God, purpose of God, and decree of God. 'Will' is a general term and comprehends those things also which do not come to pass. That God wills that all men hear His Word attentively, which, however, is never done. But a 'purpose' of God comprises those things which certainly come to pass. For whatever God purposes is done without any exception. 'Decree' of God is

still stricter grade, this, viz, that God decrees that He by certain means will bring about what He has purposed by Himself." (Baier III, 536).

The term "counsel" the Standard Dictionary defines thus: "Purpose as the result of careful consideration." No one will challenge the correctness of this definition.

This is the way in which Scripture, and according to Scripture, Lutheran theology, uses these terms. But there is one exception. Within the Ohio and Iowa Synods, since the outbreak of the controversy on predestination, these terms have constantly been confused. This confusion served a double purpose. For one thing, with its help it was possible to create the impression as though the doctrine of Dr. Walther and the Synodical Conference contained a certain contradiction. By terming the eternal purpose or decree of God a "will" of God and comparing this "will" with the universal will of grace, it was easy to make the charge against the Synodical Conference that it was teaching "contradictory wills in God," an error which is rejected in the F. C. (**Trigl.** p. 1075.) However, predestination is not a mere will of God; it is an eternal purpose and decree. As to the will of God, Dr. Pieper untiringly pointed out that the universal will of grace which without distinction extends over all men.

On the other hand, by terming the universal will of grace a "purpose of God, it was easy to confound the two doctrines in such a manner as to identify predestination with the universal will of grace as far as it is realized in those who believe to the end. But God's universal will of grace is not an eternal purpose; it may be frustrated and is frustrated by many. At the same time, by identifying predestination with the universal will of grace, as far as it is realized, it was possible to imagine and present the realization of God's gracious will as dependent on the conduct of man, an idea which is excluded by the doctrine of the Formula of Concord.

It is therefore of great importance to be very careful and precise in one's terminology if confusion is to be avoided. It is, of course, correct to speak of a universal counsel of God which includes both sides, those who are saved and those who are lost. This counsel also is immutable. It is mentioned in the Formula of Concord, (**Trigl.** p. 1077): "Even as God has ordained in His (eternal) counsel that the Holy Ghost should call, enlighten, and convert the elect through the Word and that He will justify and save all those who by true faith receive Christ, so He also determined in His counsel that He will harden,

reprobate, and condemn those who are called through the Word, if they reject the Word and resist the Holy Ghost who wished to be efficacious and to work in them through the Word, and persevere therein. And in this manner many are called but few are chosen." However, the unchangeable "ordo salutis" which has the reverse, "He that believeth not shall be damned," is not predestination, which extends over the elect only and has no reverse, although, as mentioned before, this order of salvation must be taught in connection with predestination.

But while it is correct to term the order of salvation with its reverse an eternal unchangeable decree or counsel of God, it is not correct to term the universal will of grace thus and identify it with predestination as far as this will of God is realized. This is human speculation. It is construing a doctrine, by unwarranted deduction, from a given premise of simply taking it out of the "sedes doctrinae".

Having thus cleared the atmosphere, it will be easier for us to appraise the various declarations of the former Iowa and Ohio Synods and the present A. L. C. From more remote days, one specimen may suffice as an example of the older mode of teaching.

In 1893 Dr. S. Fritschel presented the doctrine of Iowa thus: "The Iowa Synod also teaches the particularism of predestination, but maintains with the Confessions that it is nevertheless the same gracious will as the universal. According to the latter, God will have all men to be saved, yet not unconditionally but in the order of faith. Now since He knows from eternity how many there are who suffer themselves to be saved within this order, the universal will to save all believers becomes the will to save just a certain number. The universal will thus becomes particular without suffering any alteration, but simply by passing under the aspect of the divine knowledge." (Unterscheidungslehren, p. 64.) Here not only predestination is termed a will of God, but the realization of the universal will of grace is presented as dependent on the conduct of man, for the elect are those of whom God knew from eternity that they would "suffer themselves to be saved in this order." And the universal will to save all believers becomes particular "simply by passing under the aspect of divine foreknowledge." This is an election in view of faith or rather of the different conduct of natural man. Quotations like these might be multiplied indefinitely from the publications of the Ohio and Iowa Synods.

## The Chicago Theses on Predestination

It stands to reason that a change in the mode of presenting the doctrine of conversion must also affect the doctrine of predestination. As long as the doctrine of conversion, as taught by Iowa and Ohio, was essentially synergistic, predestination "intuitu fidei" or in view of faith seemed perfectly satisfactory, and even indispensable to them. But when a substitute was found for synergism by assuming that man is not by nature inclined to wilful resistance, eliminating thereby the troublesome "omitting" or "overcoming of wilful resistance", this naturally influenced to some extent their mode of presenting the doctrine of election also.

Keeping in mind that the Holy Ghost overcomes the natural resistance without any co-operation on the part of man and contending that wilful resistance is never overcome, our opponents are now in a position to employ all the old Lutheran terms used in the doctrine of predestination just as they were always used in the Synodical Conference, and yet still cling to their basic idea of predestination as the universal will of grace in as far as it is realized in those who are converted and finally saved. They could now admit, and did admit, that in us there is absolutely no cause of predestination, but that predestination is the cause of faith and of all that belongs to salvation. By identifying the terms "will", "purpose", and "counsel" they could and did admit that predestination is an unalterable counsel of God and that our salvation is firmly established upon it. They could and did also make a distinction between the universal will of grace and predestination and treat them separately as two distinct doctrines. But the difference which they admit is still this only that in predestination the will of God is looked at from a different point of view. All these and other features are found in the Chicago Theses on Predestination, and still these theses distinctly set forth the newer Iowan doctrine of predestination which is not essentially different from their old conception. How was this done?

Among the various sets of theses which were presented to the Intersynodical Conferences while discussing predestination, there was one double set which was to illustrate the Iowan idea that predestination is nothing else than the universal will of grace in its realization in those who believe. They read as follows:

A. Universal Will of Grace	B. Predestination Scripture teach-
Scripture teach-	es that God from

es that everything which God has done, is doing, and will do in time here on earth, in order to acquire and appropriate to men salvation in Christ. He does in accordance with an eternal premeditated will, counsel, and purpose. God was moved and prompted to do this only by His eternal divine goodness, grace and mercy for lost and condemned men.

1. God has in the fullness of time sent His Son into the world for all men, who has acquired perfect salvation for all, for each individual. God has done this as realization of the eternal premeditated will, counsel and purpose, which He has resolved before the foundation of the world regarding the preparation of salvation.

2. This fact that God has fully acquired complete salvation and righteousness for all men, God has also revealed and made known to all men in the Gospel. This Gospel of His He causes to be preached in the whole world in order that men may hear it, and thereby come to the knowledge of the truth, and thus be saved. God does this as realization of the eternal counsel which He has resolved before the foundation of the world regarding the offering of salvation.

3. Through the Gospel which is His means and instrument, ever efficacious and equally earnest with all men, the Holy Ghost approaches the individual sinner, lost by nature, but redeemed by Christ. After having brought the sinner to a knowledge of his utter depravity, and having terrified him through the preaching of the Law,

eternity has resolved to do all this in me and all believers, 2 Tim. 1, 9; Rom. 8, 28; Eph. 1. 5.

This gracious purpose and counsel of God which He has resolved concerning us, His children (namely, to prepare salvation, offer, appropriate and keep it to us) we call, **with Scripture and the Confessions**, the eternal election of grace to sanctification and righteousness (Eph. 1, 4) or predestination to the brotherhood of Christ (Rom. 8, 29) or the eternal adoption of children (Eph. 1, 5).

1. God has in the fullness of time sent His Son into the world for us. Who has acquired perfect salvation for us, for every one. God has done this as realization of the eternal counsel premeditated before the foundation of the world regarding the preparation of salvation for us, the children of God.

2. This fact that Christ has fully acquired complete salvation and righteousness for us God has revealed and made known in the Gospel. This Gospel of His He causes to be preached in the whole world in order that we may hear it and thereby come to the knowledge of the truth and thereby be saved. God does this as realization of the eternal counsel which He has resolved regarding the offering of salvation to us.

3. Through this Gospel which is His means and instrument, ever efficacious and equally earnest also in us, the Holy Ghost approaches us individual sinners, lost by nature but redeemed by Christ. After having brought us to a knowledge of our sin and utter depravity and having terrified us through the preaching of the Law, He

the Holy Spirit earnestly purposes to bring him to faith in his Savior and thus to appropriate to him the entire salvation acquired by Christ, to justify him, to preserve him in faith by the Word and in this manner to carry out His work of grace unto the end. God does this as realization of the eternal counsel which He has resolved before the foundation of the world regarding the appropriation and preservation of salvation.

Note how in the above juxtaposition of the universal grace of God and predestination many things are crammed into the chapter "Universal Will of Grace" which are not the universal gracious will of God, but something else. This was done for the purpose of identifying this will of God with predestination.

Now if this predestination of the Iowan conception of the universal grace and predestination had been rejected and had been supplanted by a truly Lutheran presentation of these two doctrines, and if such a declaration had been accepted by Ohio and Iowa, we could truthfully say that a real unity had been achieved in the doctrine of predestination.

But what was done? The first part was, with only slight alterations, accepted and imbedded in the Chicago Theses under the caption, "Universal Will of Grace". It was accepted in all its confusedness. What these theses say, that God does everything according to an eternal purpose and counsel etc., etc., is not the universal will of grace! The universal will of grace is: God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2, 4), or: God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3, 9). And this faulty conception of universal grace is in the Chicago Theses placed at the head of the doctrine of predestination, thus securing the Iowan meaning of the theses.

Instead of tiring the reader with a detailed explanation, showing how these theses throughout suggest the Iowan idea, we shall adduce the testimony of a man who knows how these theses were meant. Dr. Geo. Fritschel is one of their authors. We may say he was the chief author of this part of the Chicago Theses. After the Missouri Synod had refused to accept these theses, he frankly admitted that the doctrine set forth in them

is identical with the old doctrine of the Iowa Synod, as contained in the St. Sebald Theses in which our doctrine is still condemned as Calvinistic. Referring to these theses of 1880, he writes: "That is the doctrine to which we Iowans have pledged ourselves at our ordination. **Another doctrine of Iowa we do not know.** And that this is the doctrine of Iowa is shown by the Chicago Theses which are nothing else but a mode of stating this good old doctrine from a certain aspect ("unter bestimmter Voraussetzung"), though not in our phrases. But of what consequence are words and phrases as compared with the matter? ("Aber was kommt auf Worte und Phrasen an gegenueber der Sache?") The truth can be expressed in all kinds of phrases." **Kirchl. Zeitschr.**, Sept. 1930, p. 547. In the face of such an admission, publicly made in an official periodical of the former Iowa Synod, the constant reproof that those who find a double meaning in the Chicago Theses are guilty of sinful mistrust does not, to put it mildly, appear to be very well justified.

### The A. L. C. Declaration on Predestination

In order to point out the inadequacy of this Declaration as a basis for church union it is necessary to enter into a discussion of the proper method of presenting the doctrine of predestination. On this matter very definite Scriptural rules have been laid down in the Formula of Concord by which we should abide, without inventing new methods. Faithfully following the advice of Luther, the Formula of Concord points out a **wrong way** and a **right way** to contemplate predestination.

Which is the wrong way? It is speculating on God's secret counsel without the Word of God. This invariably leads either to carnal security and a life after the flesh or to doubt and despair which destroy faith in the heart of the Christian. For if a person starts from the idea that predestination is a mere secret decree of God to save some people and to reject the rest, he is apt to do one of two things. Either he will think, if I am predestinated to eternal life, nothing can hinder my final salvation, no matter how much I enjoy the pleasures of this present life; nothing can do me any harm. Or else he will think, if I do not belong to the number of the elect, nothing can save me; praying, hearing the Word of God, etc., will all be in vain. Such speculating on the secret counsel of God is to be condemned under all circumstances. Luther termed it a trying to fathom God's counsel "a priori".

Which is the right way? It is to contemplate predestination only in Christ, or, which

is the same, according to the revealed Word of God. This method can never lead to carnal security or to doubt and despair, but must redound to the glory of God's free grace and consequently to the strengthening of our faith, our Christian life, and hope. Starting from the universality of God's love and of the redemption through Christ, heeding the order in which God leads His children to eternal life, a Christian is led step by step on the way of justification, sanctification, etc., to the certainty of his own personal eternal election and hence the certainty of his final salvation. This is what Luther termed knowing God and finding one's election "a posteriori".

Read the Formula of Concord, **Trigl.** pp. 286ff. and you will see that is a correct summary of the genuinely Lutheran method of teaching and contemplating predestination.

It will be readily seen how essentially different from the method of the Formula of Concord is the Intuitu fidei theory which more and more superseded it during the seventeenth century and later. Instead of comprehending the whole counsel of God, including the universal grace and the redemption through Christ and the whole order of salvation, the theologians of the seventeenth century reduced predestination to this one eternal purpose of God: to save those of whom He knew from eternity that they would believe to the end. Although the fact cannot be denied that God has purposed from eternity to save those of whom He knew that they would believe to the end, this is not the Scripture doctrine of predestination as set forth in the Formula of Concord; and this new formula was very soon misused as a welcome hiding place for synergistic and similar errors.

We now come to the important question: just what took the place of the Intuitu fidei theory in the Iowa Synod when this formula was discarded? Did they return to the method of the Formula of Concord? No doubt they intended to do so. Or, rather, they made an attempt to accommodate themselves to the old Lutheran method. But since their doctrine of predestination is not that of the Formula of Concord, they unwittingly slipped into an altogether new and unheard-of method in doing so—a method which took George Fritschell years of intensive study to elaborate. If predestination is nothing else than the universal will of grace or counsel of salvation as far as it is realized in those who believe, then the proper method must be to bring out this idea by looking at this counsel from two different points of view and presenting them accordingly. Dr. Fritschell summarizes the result of his

labors in the following words: "There are two ways of thinking of this eternal counsel of grace, which Luther denotes 'from below' (a posteriori) and 'from above' (a priori). The latter is the one rejected in paragraphs 9-11, the former is the one used throughout by the Formula of Concord on the basis of Scripture." (By the way, Luther never uses the expressions, thinking of the counsel of God "from below" and "from above". The whole is a complete misunderstanding of Luther. J. B.)

"If you are thinking 'from above', you are placing yourself with your thoughts in the time before the creation of the world and are reflecting on that which God would do in the future, whereby we may easily arrive at what the Formula of Concord explains in paragraphs 9-11. If you are thinking 'from below', you are from the viewpoint of a pious and believing child of God considering whence the present and future salvation, according to the Word of God, is come upon you, resp., will come (i. e. as the realization of an eternal counsel of grace) and all features given in paragraph 12 are found, so that this is a most comforting doctrine." (*Quellen und Dokumente* p. 355.)

In the same connection Dr. Fritschel writes: "In predestination the will of God is viewed 'from below', in the universal will of grace 'from above'." Hence, "viewing the will of God from above" in his terminology is not objectionable in its place. He also calls the *Intuitu fidei* theory "a Lutheran a priori method." although he does not recommend it.

It is true, if this new method of Dr. Fritschel is substituted for that of the Formula of Concord, it is easy to arrive at the result desired by him. For then predestination appears to be simply the universal will of grace, or the eternal purpose of God in its realization as viewed by a believer who from a certain point of view looks back at this eternal counsel of God from which his present state of grace flows. But as the *Intuitu fidei* method may be used, and has been used, as a hiding place for synergism, so this new method is a very useful means for protecting the idea that the gracious will of God is realized in those only who offer nothing worse than natural resistance, but not in those who resist it wilfully, an idea which is absolutely excluded by the method of the Formula of Concord.

How successful Dr. Fritschel was in his effort to introduce this new method in the Lutheran Church of America is seen by various tokens. In the Chicago Theses he pre-

sents the doctrine of predestination according to his own method. In the Iowa Synod this stand-point method completely supplanted the older mode of teaching. And although the Ohio Synod, which had once written the "*Intuitu fidei*" on its synodical banner, for a long time withstood the newer mode of teaching, still since the merger of the two synods even the Ohio wing of the A. L. C. more and more yielded to the method of Dr. Fritschel. There are only a few of the older members who still adhere to the *Intuitu fidei* theory.

But even in our midst this method is beginning to take a foothold. In the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XI, No. 2, p. 134ff., sixteen theses on predestination are offered which distinctly show the influence of Dr. Fritschel's favorite ideas. These theses cover only the common ground, and entirely ignore the differences which still exist between us and the A. L. C. It is only natural that wherever these theses are discussed at inter-synodical pastoral conferences no differences will arise.

Now, this twentieth century method of presenting the doctrine of predestination is employed in the A. L. C. Declaration also. It protects the old errors of our opponents in a much better manner than the seventeenth century method could ever do. Just as the double set of theses presented to the Inter-synodical Conference about two decades ago had done this, so the A. L. C. Declaration presents under "A" the universal plan or purpose of salvation inasmuch as it extends over **all men**. Under "B" the same eternal purpose is briefly summarized inasmuch as it relates to **us** who believe, which they call the doctrine of election. But although it is true that God in the elect carries out His eternal purpose, this truth can be called the doctrine of election just as little as can God's eternal purpose to lead those who believe to the end to eternal life.

Under "C" a few special points are defined of which the third is of particular interest to us. It reads: "When Scripture speaks of this eternal election it, as a rule, takes its position in time, after men have come to faith, and in presenting this doctrine, the Scripture addresses itself to the believers." Why this strange expression, "Scripture takes its position in time"? Just what do the words mean? A Christian may, as Dr. Fritschel tells us, look at the will of God from two different points of view. He may take his position either in eternity or in time, and either one of these two ways he declares to be admissible, although the latter is prefer-

able. And now we hear in the A. L. C. Declaration that when Scripture speaks of the eternal election, it was "as a rule" takes its position in time. Does this mean that Scripture has two ways of presenting the doctrine of election, occasionally presenting it from the standpoint of eternity but much oftener from the standpoint of time? And is the inference this, that the method of viewing God's purpose from the standpoint of time is to be preferred to the other method of viewing it from the standpoint of eternity? This would perfectly agree with Dr. Fritschel's idea. Then we have here two methods, either one of them Scriptural, though not of equal value. The restriction, "as a rule", leaves no other alternative. This is another proof that in the A. L. C. Declaration a method of presenting predestination is employed which is essentially different from the mode of teaching which we find in the Formula of Concord not two ways are admissible, but only one. There is a wrong way which is utterly to be condemned, namely, to speculate without the Word of God on His secret counsel. And there is only one way which is right, namely, to follow step by step the revealed Word. Of viewing God's will and purpose from two different standpoints the Formula of Concord knows nothing, nor does the Brief Statement.

Other distinguishing features of the old Lutheran method and the new method are the following: First, when we follow the old method, this difficulty arises for our reason: Since all men conduct themselves in an equally evil manner over against the saving grace of God and since God's grace extends over all men alike, there seems to be no reason why one should be lost while another, although in the same guilt, is elected and saved. Why the unequal result? We can give no answer; God alone knows the reason.

This difficulty is eliminated by the new method. For the same gracious "will and purpose" of God which extends over all men alike is viewed in predestination as it is realized in us who believe. That is all. But how about the conduct of man toward saving grace? This question, which the Formula of Concord discusses at length in Art. XI, they say, must not be drawn here! It has been dealt with in the doctrine of conversion by the distinction between natural and wilful resistance. But when speaking of predestination this question would only be a disturbing element; it must not even be raised. This is forbidding to raise a question which the Formula of Concord discusses in this very connection, the doctrine of predestination.

Secondly, the origin of that evil conduct of man which hinders and prevents salvation in the majority of cases, offers us no difficulty at all. For all men are by nature inclined to this evil conduct; and whenever it is overcome, this is done by the grace of God alone.

But in the doctrine of our opponents right here real difficulty arises, although they prefer not to mention it in connection with predestination. Whether mentioned or not, the difficulty is there. The origin of wilful resistance, that evil conduct of man which prevents the realization of God's plan of salvation in the majority of cases, cannot be satisfactorily explained by them, if man is not by nature inclined to it. They therefore call it a psychological mystery. The A. L. C. Declaration neither asserts nor denies this mystery. But as long as this point is left in the dark no real unity can be said to exist.

Now we see why it was necessary to supplement the Brief Statement in the manner in which this was done. The new mode of teaching enables and even compels the A. L. C. to use some expressions which formerly had been denounced by them as Calvinistic leaven, e. g. that predestination is a cause of faith. This made the doctrine of the Synodical Conference appear in a somewhat different light. Although they by no means accept our position, they now hold that the doctrine of predestination as presented in the Brief Statement is not essentially different from their own. To be sure, they still see "theological" and exegetical differences, but they do not consider these as divisive of church fellowship. To accept every word of the Brief Statement would mean to give up their own position, rejecting the psychological mystery and the dissimilar conduct, which they are not ready to do. What else, then, could they do in order to save their position, but to declare that they believe the doctrine contained in the Brief Statement to be correct, but at the same time supplement this document by a declaration employing their own new mode of teaching, the view-point theory, whereby their own peculiar tenets are safeguarded?

But whether they realize it or not, there remain important doctrinal differences which should never be veiled by accepting two different methods of presenting the doctrine of predestination, the old Lutheran method, employed in the Brief Statement, and the method invented by Dr. Fritschel, employed in the A. L. C. Declaration. For this reason



the establishing of church-fellowship on the basis of these two documents would be a unionistic ignoring of errors which have never been retracted but are even covered by one of these documents.

Although a new method of teaching does not necessarily involve false doctrine, still in this case the method has been elaborated in order to defend a false doctrine of predestination. And by granting the method of Dr. Fritschel equal rights in our midst with the method employed in the Brief Statement, we would be opening the door to that false doctrine. The new method would soon claim exclusive right, and, with it, the error itself would slip into our Synod. All this should have been carefully weighed before accepting the A. L. C. Declaration. But how could pastors and laymen have done this during a few busy days?

One more word about the contention that by "accepting the Brief Statement" the A. L. C. has abandoned its old idea of the unequal conduct and the psychological mystery.. The A. L. C. representatives themselves very plainly stated in a conference with our representatives that their acceptance of the Brief Statement does **not** include assent to everything which is said therein. They have, e.g., their "doubts as to whether all the Scripture passages cited in sections 35-40 of the Brief Statement actually prove what they are intended to prove." They had their scruples about the term "definite number" which does not fit very well into their system. (Letter of our Committee, Dec. 8, 1939, p. 8ff. **C. T. M.** Dec., 1939., p. 934.) Now, if their 'acceptance of the Brief Statement' admittedly **does not** mean acceptance of everything contained in this document, what definite proof can be adduced that they accept the rejection of the psychological mystery and hence have given up their idea of a twofold kind of resistance? There is none.

But there is another way open to settle this question once and for all. It is not too late to ask the A. L. C. a question which is so very pertinent here. Our representatives are still in touch with theirs. Why not ask them directly, whether or not their Declaration as presented to the Missouri Synod and endorsed by the A. L. C. includes the rejection of that psychological mystery and of their former distinction between natural and wilful resistance.

I therefore conclude this chapter with a personal declaration. If our Union Committee will succeed in obtaining a written state-

ment from the commissioners of the A. L. C. saying that the acceptance by the A. L. C. of the Brief Statement is meant exactly in the sense just stated in the words that have been emphasized, I promise to retract publicly in the **Lutheran Witness** my accusation against the A. L. C. of still harboring errors in the doctrine of conversion and predestination. And I would make such a statement gladly, sincerely thankful to God that real unity in these doctrines has finally been attained.

But if such a statement cannot be obtained from the A. L. C., those among us who up to this time were convinced that the A. L. C. has accepted our position should see and admit that the old doctrinal difference at this point is not yet settled. This result would at least help to re-establish in our own midst the old unity. But mere outward union with those who still disagree with us in doctrine would be unionism.

(to be continued)

## ☉ Unanimous Union

Our brethren in Australia had some church-fellowship discussions with the United Ev. Luth. Church of Australia. The latter group is a member of the Lutheran World Convention and the Martin Luther Bund of German. One part of these discussions was carried on in the official church papers of these Australian bodies. Among other things, our brethren over there stated the following condition:

"It will be necessary, should the intersynodical committees agree in doctrine, that all pastors, conferences, committees, parishes, and congregations of both bodies signify agreement, act accordingly, and deal with those who obdurately oppose themselves to the truth." (**C. T. M.** X, 867.)

Such a principle of unanimous union is also our own in the Missouri Synod here in the States. The American Lutheran Church should take note of this fact. And the membership of our Synod must never lose sight of this fact. And the membership of our Synod must never lose sight of this fact in the current negotiations with the A. L. C.

—G. S.

## A CORRECTION

The October & November issue of *The Confessional Lutheran* is to be numbered 10 and 11 instead of 10.

—A. E. B.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE ST. LOUIS  
UNION ARTICLES OF 1938 MUST  
BE RESCINDED**